



Teaching Toolkit

Assessment Methods

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Date: January 2010

Assessment Methods

Opportunities for innovation in assessment are boundless, though assessment usually reverts to essay questions, multiple choice questions, or reports.

Continually using the same small range of assessment methods not only results in the same skill set being assessed over and over, but also serves to disadvantage those individuals who find these methods more challenging. Over-reliance also encourages a surface approach to learning, with the student focusing on strategies to pass rather than mastering the subject matter.

The assessment methods should be aligned to ensure that the skills and abilities developed by the students are assessed in a manner consistent with the design and delivery of the course as a whole. The choice of assessment method should therefore be influenced by the learning outcomes and the type of skills you are seeking to engender in the learners.

Overview of Assessment Methods

Annotated bibliographies	Artefacts	Book review
Case studies	Competence checklists	Computer-based assessment
Concept maps	Critical incident analysis	Diagram Sheets
Direct observation	Dissertations	Essay
Exhibition	Eye-witness testimonials	Field work
Group Work	In-tray exercises	Learning contracts
Logs/diaries/reflective journals	MCQ	Model construction
Work based Assessment	Observation	Open book
Orals	Participative online discussion	Peer assessment
Performance	Portfolios/e-portfolio	Posters
Presentations	Problem work	Projects
Reflective Practice	Research enquiry	Self- assessment
Simulated interviews	Simulations	Structured summaries
Two-part assessment	Video	Viva/Lab defence
Web page creation	Website review	Objective Structured Clinical Examinations

Explanation of Some Less Familiar Methods

- Competence checklists** Used in number of professions to ensure particular abilities have been undertaken & assessed. Grid in which students identify when they observed an activity, rehearsed it, estimated themselves ready to be assessed, date the assessment took place, outcome, tutor's name, and any further comments.
- Case studies** Used to enable student to demonstrate skills learned in professional contexts to other settings. This can involve requiring them to provide recommendations or solutions, or to write their own case studies based on their own experiences
- Logs/diaries/reflective journals** All used where students are marked on practice and reflection. Can range from simple logs/checklists to more detailed reflective journals
- Portfolios** Widely used to provide evidence of competence from their practice. Good method to help students assess their own level of competence, by asking them to select evidence that best demonstrates their ability. Strong guidelines required though to prevent it from becoming a collection of random and irrelevant info.
- Observation** This refers to the observation of the skills in practice, watching a professional and learning from the experience. Can be simple checklists or more detailed (requiring subjective responses)
- Artefacts** Tend to be physical products of students' professional practice (e.g., art work, models, computer programmes, dental bridges etc). Important to have clear criteria established beforehand. Good idea to have sample artefacts before students begin, and frequent checks throughout (so time & resources aren't wasted)
- In-tray exercises** Students are presented with a dossier of paper which they have an opportunity to peruse before the question is presented. The dossier includes a range of information (some relevant, some not, some a total red herring) but the student must use it to solve a real world problem. Can last for an hour or all day, and may include the option to consult with other students if desired.
- Objective Structures Clinical Examinations** Involve students undertaking a set of prescribed tasks (for example, 9 in 90 minutes) at a series of assessment stations often placed around a large room. These provide opportunities to demonstrate their skills in a range of areas in a practical way.
- Posters/presentations** Used by individuals or groups to demonstrate work undertaken individually or collectively. Can be theoretical or reporting back on a practical activity. Useful because can be used in conjunction with peer assessment
- Orals** Can be used to interrogate the understanding that underlies practice. Serves to introduce an element of performance into assessment, though due consideration should be given to criteria and weighting of marks.
- Learning contracts** Used to involve students in setting their own learning goals. Generally have four stages:

entry profiling; needs analysis; action planning; evaluation. Levels of relevant competence are set out at the beginning of the programme, and then they agree upon how best to develop these to satisfy these outcomes.