Assessment in Experience-based Learning and Professional Practice

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Overview

What do we do now in assessment in WIL

Conceptualising assessment for longer term learning

What does WIL enable for learning, and for assessment?

What do we need to manage for assessment in WIL?
What are some of our good current practices for assessment in WIL situations?

Away from structured written assessment, to students own documentation, eg. Film, case presentations, booklets, etc.

Formal evaluation (Oz-wide instrument) by supervisors, letters from supervisors, learning plans and portfolios, assignments matched to nature of placement

OSCE students given clinical examples in structured environment and they proceed through different examples in short periods of time. Also mini-CEX: observation of treatment of case with real patients in normal clinical settings. Both include specific feedback.

Lots of formative assessment about presentation, communication, timliness, etc. Often as a hurdle.

In real events: complete particular aspects of event organising with local organisers, etc
Purposes of assessment

Certifying achievement
(summative assessment)

Aiding learning
(formative assessment)
Purposes of assessment

Certifying achievement
(summative assessment)

Aiding learning
(formative assessment)

Fostering lifelong learning
(sustainable assessment)
Sustainable assessment

“Assessment that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of students to meet their own future learning needs.”

(Boud, 2000)

Needs also to be sustainable for academics!
Assessment for longer term learning

Key features:

1. sustainable
2. develops informed judgement
3. constructs reflexive learners
4. forms the practitioner
Feature 1. Sustainable

Looks beyond the immediate content
To what is required beyond the end of the course

Avoids creating dependency
eg. through pleasing the lecturer, or looking to them for judgement

Focuses on higher-order knowledge and skills in context
Memorising as such is not tested because doing so fosters bad habits
Feature 2. Develops informed judgement

Students must develop the capacity to make judgments about their own learning

Otherwise they cannot be effective learners now or in the future

Assessment is about informing students’ own judgements as well as making judgements on their work

Summative assessment alone is too risky and does not equip students for new challenges. Assessment is more important than grading

Opportunities for developing informed judgement need to be staged across a program

Working across subjects is essential
Feature 3. Constructs reflexive learners

Students must necessarily be involved in assessment

Assessment is a key influence in their formation and they are active subjects

Positions students to see themselves as learners who are pro-active and generative

Such learners take responsibility for driving learning

Focus on fostering reflexivity and self-regulation through every aspect of a course

not just assessment tasks.
Feature 4. Forms the practitioner

Assessment to help calibrate judgement
Learners act on the basis of their belief in their own judgements; if these are flawed it is more serious than particular knowledge gaps.

Develops confidence and skills to manage their own learning and assessment
Understanding is not enough.

Communities of judgment beyond teachers need to be tapped (peers, practitioners, professional bodies)
To help identify what constitutes good work of any kind.

Develops the capacity to work effectively with others to assist learning and mutually develop informed judgement
Assessment in work settings occurs with and for others.
Assessment Futures

Many students currently graduate without appropriate skills in assessment.

Assessment serves many purposes, including:
- helping students improve their learning, and
- certifying their learning.

This website is about an important additional purpose for assessment.

It is about equipping students for the learning and assessing they will need to do after completing their course and the challenges they will face after graduation.

Broad structure of the website:
This site provides information on:
- ideas and strategies to browse and consider, but no prescriptions for what you should do.
- ideas that are potentially applicable across a wide range of disciplinary areas.
- examples of how these ideas and strategies have already been used and tested.
- how to adapt and extend these ideas to suit your own subject matter and local circumstances.

Key assessment elements
- ENGAGING STUDENTS
- AUTHENTIC ACTIVITIES
- STUDENTS DESIGN ASSESSMENTS
- INTEGRATIVE TASKS
- LEARNING AND JUDGEMENT
- MODELLING AND PRACTICE
- WORKING WITH PEERS
- GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Who is this Assessment Futures website for?
- Experienced teachers in higher education, who have completed some study in the area. (It is not a basic introduction to teaching and assessment.)
- Teachers who have developed knowledge and skills in teaching and learning. They will know how to take ideas and design guidelines to develop and rework effective activities and strategies for their students.

Evidence and research findings
Assessment Futures is supported by theory and empirical evidence. For clarity this information is not foregrounded, but it can be accessed through hyperlinks to the various examples and to the references section of the site. Where evidence is partial or incomplete, the professional judgement of the author has been applied.

Research on assessment practice in Higher Education is limited and is often generated by a local problem or situation. It rarely tracks a major intervention or brings together different studies of the same thing. It tends to be suggestive and ambiguous. Implications are not always easily drawn from it.

If you have evidence that informs the practices described here, please contact us.
What does WIL enable in learning?

• Knowledge and experience of work and workplaces
• Direct contact with the applications of knowledge
• Opportunities to practice (and produce) in authentic settings
• Experience of how learning does and does not occur in work settings
What does WIL enable for assessment?

- Location of tasks in rich authentic settings
- Focus on the social and cultural conditions of work
- Testing of self in challenging environments
- Greater agency in assessment by learners
- Greater use of practitioners for feedback and calibrating judgement
- Potential involvement of peers (not necessarily co-located, not necessarily co-students)
What do we need to manage for assessment in WIL?

Preparing students to be effective in assessment in work settings

• Briefing, equipping in judgement and dealing with complexity
• Rehearsal and safe practice

Developing monitoring and reflective tools to take into work settings

• Learning agreements
• Reflective devices
• Self-management strategies

Making the most of experiences

• Debriefing and consolidation
• Portrayal of learning
What special issues arise in WIL assessment?
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Separation of staff from students and awareness of what they do

Lack of continuity of staff—who can see the range of experience/achievements on WIL?

Implications of students being the only points of continuity

Inconsistencies between staff in identification, interpretation of standards and criteria and application to students’ work

What constitutes feedback for which purposes?

Ad hoc nature of much formative assessment

Multiple contexts, multiple assessors, multiple outcomes

Lower level of institutional control
How well does WIL assessment stack up?

How is work-integrated learning assessed? Is it fully linked to graduate attributes and the rest of the curriculum, or an add-on?

What kinds of formative assessment are built in to the work experience? Formally? Informally? Do they help build the skills and dispositions that WIL is there for?

Who does formative assessment? Do they appreciate the curriculum of which WIL is a part? How can they be brought to understand learning outcomes and how they can be achieved in situ?

What preparation do students have for how to monitor their own experience in WIL to ensure they are gaining the most from it? Are they adequately debriefed on their learning (not just at the end)?
How could WIL assessments more effectively promote learning beyond the program?

Intermediate assessments

End assessments
Assessment in WIL, as if learning really mattered

• Start with the impact on learning, *nothing* is more important

• Other considerations follow *only* when the consequences for learning are secure.

• Assessment permeates WIL and is permeated by it

• Just because we are not present doesn’t imply that we don’t have major obligations to make it work

• Work experiences usually have great emotional and volitional impact on students. How can we ensure through assessment that it has other worthwhile learning effects?
References


See also [www.assessmentfutures.com](http://www.assessmentfutures.com)