

Assessing Real World Learning Experiences Validly and Reliably

Jason But, Lorraine Fleckhammer,
Grainne Oates, Helen Rickards

Outline

- What is real world learning?
- Objectives of real world learning
- Assessment – Methodology
- Assessment – Validity and Reliability
- Continuum of Real World Assessment Tasks
- Conclusions and Future Thoughts

What is real world learning?

- Tasks that give all students experience in the professional practice of their discipline
- A combination of open-structured learning involving
 - Professional contexts
 - Active learning
 - Student reflection
 - Supportive environment

Objectives of real world learning

- Primary aim is to expose students to learning experiences that replicate or mirror situations encountered in the workforce

Benefits

Application of theory in a controlled environment

Opportunities for observation & feedback

Individualised learning

Multiple assessors

Development of multiple skills

Limitations

Lack of parity/consistency of tasks
Between students

Assessors – objectivity

Assessors – consistency

Difficulty in modelling real world assessment

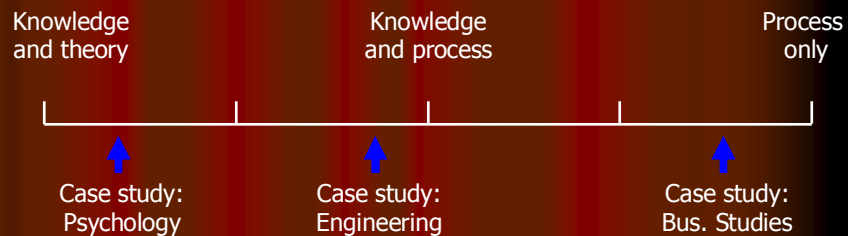
Assessment - Methodology

- Crucial to define purpose of assessment
 - Summative
 - Formative
 - Criterion-referenced
- Valid, reliable, practical, cost-effective, fair & useful

Assessment – Validity & Reliability

- Validity = does the task achieve its purpose
- Reliability = is the measurement consistent
- Difficulty lies not in the validity but in the reliability
 - Availability of tasks from student-to-student, year-to-year may vary
- Reliability can be improved by:
 - Standardised assessment criteria
 - Detailed assessment rubrics
 - Well constructed marking schemes

Continuum of Real World Assessment Tasks



Conclusions & future thoughts

- Real-world learning experience can compliment, extend & enhance student learning
- However, further consideration of the following is needed:
 - Hurdle requirements rather than graded tasks
 - Student's self-assessment
 - Model better represented as a graph than as a continuum
 - Anything else??

"Not only should assessment practice be student-centred and based on outcomes, but the teaching program should be directed at achieving the desired outcomes of student learning"

(Nightingale et al. 1996)