

# Strengths and limitations of assessment essay sample

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Compare the strengths and limitations of a range of assessment methods with reference to the needs of individual learners. Each learner has their own specific requirements regarding the process in which they are able to produce evidence to meet the requirements through a range of assessment methods. In order to meet the requirements for each vocational qualification the assessor must first establish which methods of assessment are best suited to that learner. With the Joint Educational and Training Services we utilise each placement we have available and the environment in which they are set in. Below is a list of assessment methods I use detailing the strengths and limitations of each; Holistic: Enables learners to demonstrate several aspects of a qualification at the same time.

Strengths - Holistic assessment of a performance unit could incorporate aspects of a knowledge unit. Similar criteria from different units can be assessed at the same time. This makes evidence collection and demonstration of competence much more efficient for assessors and enables learners to progress more readily when needed.

Limitations - Holistic assessment is great if you are fully conversant with the whole aspect of it. If however the learner is not and finds it difficult to grasp then they could become confused by the whole idea.

Learner statements: Learners write how they have met the assessment criteria.

Strengths - This enables learners to take ownership of their achievements and give a detailed description on the activities leading up to their competence in the required area.

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Limitations - Learners might misinterpret the assessment criteria and/or write too much or too little. Another assessment method should be used in addition to confirm competence.

Observations: Watching learners perform a skill, in British Forces Cyprus this will generally lead to an observation of performance on a learner in their primary role as an employee or apprenticeship learner.

Strengths - Enables skills to be seen in action, learners can make mistakes (if it's safe) and rectify them where required. This will enable the learner to realise what they have done wrong and make corrections where necessary. You can assess several aspects of a qualification at the same time (in lieu with Holistic assessment).

Limitations - Timing must be arranged to suit each learner, some employers do not allow for unauthorised visitors to be present during their working hours. Communication and agreements are essential for this assessment method to be effective. There isn't a permanent record unless visually recorded and questions must be asked to the learner to ensure their understanding.

Questions: A key technique for assessing understanding and stimulating thinking. Questions can be closed, hypothetical, leading, open, probing, multiple choice etc.

Strengths - Can be multiple choice, short answer or long essay style. Can challenge and promote a learners potential, questions banks can also be devised which could be used again and again for all learners. The questions

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can test critical arguments or thinking and recognising skills, oral questions also do suit some learners more than others for example; a dyslexic learner may prefer to talk through their responses.

Limitations - Closed questions only give a 'yes' or 'no' response which doesn't demonstrate knowledge. Questions must be written carefully, i. e. be unambiguous, and can be time-consuming to prepare. If the same questions are used with other learners, they could share their answers. Although this is possible all learners are constantly reminded of the need for confidentiality while under assessment at all times. Written responses might be the work of others, i. e. copied or plagiarised. Expected responses or grading criteria need to be produced beforehand to ensure consistency and validity of marking. You may also need to re-phrase some questions if learners are struggling with an answer.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): Assessing what has previously taken place to find a suitable starting point for further assessments.

Strengths - This is ideal for learners who have achieved aspects of the programme prior to commencement of a particular qualification. Learners will avoid the concept of repeating any area of competence already covered previously, this in turn will prevent any reassessments. RPL also provides a 'value' factor of the work a learner has already achieved.

Limitations - Checking the authenticity, validity and currency of the evidence produced is crucial. In some circumstance this can prove to be time

consuming for both the learner and assessor to prove, also for the assessor to assess.

Witness testimonies: A statement from a person who is familiar with your learner, this could be a line manager or placement manager dependant on the learner.

Strengths - The witness can confirm competence or achievements, providing that they are familiar with the learner and assessment criteria, for example, a workplace supervisor or manager.

Limitations - The assessor must confirm the suitability of the witness and check the authenticity of any statements. Learners may write the statement and the witness might sign it not understanding the content. In essence, not all workplace supervisors/managers are aware of the requirements of their employees needs regarding their qualification. Regardless of this lack of knowledge, employers and their line managers are happy to sign documents without fully understanding the content.

1. 6: Summarise key factors to consider when planning assessment. In order to successfully plan an assessment strategy there are various factors to take into consideration. This will ensure that all the necessary procedures are adhered to and mistakes are avoided where possible. Initially the assessor will take the learner through the Formative stage of the assessment plan, this should essentially be the starting point of good practice and will ensure that if followed correctly, the learner will understand what is expected of them. At any point of assessment you should welcome the

learner, make them feel comfortable and explain the purpose of the meeting. If you are being observed as an assessor then explain this to the learner, introduce your observer to break down any barriers of uncertainty. After any formalities you will need to ensure that both you and the learner have copies of the standards.

Check to ensure that they are the same, this will stop any unnecessary problems down the line. You will need to ensure that the learner fully understands the requirements of the standards, during this stage of the assessment plan as an assessor you must guide the learner through each unit and discuss each outcome in detail. This will help the learner overcome any future confusion which could delay their progress causing issues later on during reviews. During the overview of the standards the learner will come across other documents contained within their portfolio, these will include but will not be limited to; Cross reference tick sheets, Appeals procedures, Internal verification, Portfolio sampling and other documents which the learning provider may require. At this stage it would suit the learner best to discuss the other personalities that are involved in the assessment process and give a breakdown of the additional documents. This process involves detailing the responsibilities of the Assessor, Internal Verifier, Countersigner and any other Internal Quality Assurance or External Verification personalities that may be involved.

The next stage involves taking the learner through the Appeals procedure and explaining what this procedure involves, the personalities involved and the timescales for appealing against any assessment decisions made. Once

this process has been discussed then the learner must agree to and sign the Appeals procedure to confirm their understanding. Another area that must be taken into consideration is whether or not the learner has any recognised prior learning (RPL). Although this is a form of an assessment method it is indirect and as described in the previous question can be time consuming for both the learner to prove and the assessor to validate. As an assessor you must consider the fact that all learners are different and some may have specific needs that require additional attention, this process involves questioning the learner in order to establish if they have any particular assessment needs. This discussion is to be documented and annotated on the assessment plan detailing the outcome of the discussion.

Along the same discussion the assessor must raise awareness of Confidentiality, Equality & Diversity and Health & Safety. To confirm the learners understanding of this questions can be asked from a bank of questions already produced by the assessor. At this stage of assessment planning the assessor must complete page 1 of the assessment plan but must not sign it until you have identified the evidence requirements with your learner detailed through the remainder of the plan. During this process the assessor will take the learner through the various methods of assessment that will be used during their qualification. On detailing each outcome for the units allocated to that learner the assessor will note on the assessment plan one or more of the following methods of assessment; Observation, Examination of Evidence, Questioning, Discussion, Witness Testimony, Learner Statement, Recognition of Prior Learning or Assignments.

Once the assessment methods have been identified the assessor must

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ensure that the learner fully understands how each method is undertaken and what is expected of them, for example; Explaining how a Witness Testimony may be used and the process involved with obtaining one.

Explaining the roles of the personalities involved with the assessment process is important for the learner to understand. This ties in with the appeals procedure as the learner should know who and what options are available to them if they have issues or difficulties with their direct assessors. Explaining the role of the Countersigner and Internal Verifier are key areas to consider at this point. Moving on from the personalities involved the learner must be aware of what the evidence requirements are when being assessed. This involves taking the learner through the VACS principals, this will ensure the learner is aware that any evidence produced must be Valid, Authentic, Current and Sufficient. As an assessor it is paramount to follow these principals at all times when reviewing evidence.

At the final stage of planning the assessment you must agree an estimated completion date for the assessment plan being completed. Once this has taken place the assessment plan can be signed by both the learner and the assessor to confirm that all information contained within has been discussed and understood and the learner agrees to the estimated date for completion. A feedback sheet must also be completed detailing the key factors discussed during the meeting and what points have been agreed. The next review date with the learner will also be annotated on the feedback sheet and should consider the needs of the learner and their employer if required. On completion of the Formative stage of the assessment plan it is to be noted



that all original documentation is to be kept in the learner's portfolio, the assessor may if they wish make copies for their records.