

Compare the strengths and limitations of a range of assessment methods



Compare the strengths and limitations of a range of assessment methods with reference to the needs of individual learners

Direct observation is the primary source of gathering evidence within NVQs as it is the most appropriate way of presenting naturally occurring evidence. You're watching the candidate carry out his routine work but on the other hand the candidate may perform for you or become very nervous with you watching. Performance evidence demands consistent and repeated performance to the required standard.

Work products might be pre-op checks, job descriptions, duty rosters, checklists, accident forms, policies and procedures, records of phone calls, records of correspondence communication book records.

Work products about clients or staff should not be photocopied and put in the portfolio. Assessors should view them and fill in the relevant sheet showing what was read, where it's kept and for which PCs, it is relevant and attach it to an Evidence Record sheet.

The candidate's contribution to the Work Product needs to be made clear. Putting in an organisational policy or procedure does not show evidence of the candidate's skill or knowledge unless there is evidence to show. They understand the policy or procedure or they have applied it to their own area of work or they have trained their staff in it or they have used the policy or procedure.

Generally certificates only provide proof of attendance at a course and are not a test of knowledge or competence. Assessors may need to ask questions to test competence or knowledge. Some assessors now show proof

of competence across defined situations and this provides good evidence. If candidates are keen to keep certificates in their portfolio don't discourage them, these could be kept in the " Supporting Evidence" section at the back.

Check and fill in the Witness Status List at the front of the candidate's portfolio with regards to who can be used as a witness

A witness should ideally hold the NVQ assessor award and be in a supervisory capacity to the candidate. Colleagues can give Witness statements but in a small environment issues of pressure and collusion can arise.

Assessors can use witnesses to confirm the content of a Candidate Report by writing a supporting statement at the end of the evidence record sheet. There are two types of witness - the expert witness and the non-expert witness.

An expert witness is someone given the role of regularly and systematically observing and reporting on candidates when they are performing tasks which produce evidence towards an NVQ and who is occupationally competent, with the necessary expertise in the area for which they are providing testimony. This information should be noted by the assessor.

Briefed by the QA to ensure that they understand the standards to which the evidence relates because the expert witness testimony is more rigorous and covers a wider range of the candidate's performance, it usually has greater weight than the testimony of other witnesses. Non experts may also be used as witnesses, however, their evidence may be less reliable than that of the

expert witness as they are unlikely to be familiar with the standards being assessed.

Assessors must judge the validity of all witness testimonies. NVQ units cannot be achieved by relying on witness testimony alone.

Achievement of an NVQ unit will always involve observation of the candidate by a qualified assessor taking account of the evidence provided by witness testimony.

Simulation

This is where the candidate cannot provide evidence to cover PCs and where asking questions may be insufficient. Examples might be dealing with a health emergency or working with someone who challenges the service.

Recognising Prior Learning

STRENGTHS:

If a learner had a previous rpl , it can be used to support their other assessments. Accrediting their prior learning assessment makes a learner feel that any work done in the past in this area was not a waste of time 2. qcf is giving learners the opportunity to use rpl more and they define it as “ a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the requirements of a unit through knowledge, understanding and skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning”. Limitations:

1. may be time consuming for the assessor as will need to validate the rpl
not all of it may be relevant to the current criteria they are assessing.

2. each assessor needs to check the guidance for their relevant qualification, as the guidance varies for different qualifications.

Written questioning

Strengths:

Can take the form of essays, short answer questions or multiple choice questions. Short and multiple choice questioning are examples of objective testing as there is only one correct answer. This form of assessment is quick and easy to mark which means feedback can be given quickly to learners.

Limitations:

Multiple choice questions can be guessed if the learner is unsure so they might not be the best way to get an accurate measure of whether the learner has understood something. If more depth on short answer questions is required, essays can be used to assess understanding, literacy and high level comprehension although they take time for the learners to complete and for the assessor to mark.

Oral questioning

Strengths:

1. Can form a secondary or backup assessment to check for comprehension. They can be used to support theory while the learner is practising their skills or at work and they can be adapted or changed quickly depending on the situation.
2. open oral questions should be used to draw out the information from the learner.

Limitations:

1. Assessors should be careful not to use closed questions unless testing agreement.