

EDITORIAL

Common Blunders of Assessment

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Assessment is one of the factors that motivates the learning of the students. It is the backbone of a curriculum which ensures the attainment of the outcomes of the curriculum (Wormald, Schoeman, Somasunderam, & Penn, 2009). Ensuring the quality of the assessment is of utmost importance as poor assessment practice would result in poor or average doctors. These health professions can be unsafe for the well-being of society. It is therefore important to know what not to do in assessment. Here I would be sharing the seven big mistakes or blunders of the assessment that most of us witness commonly.

1. Subjectivity in Marking

Subjectivity marking may have occurred when students believe that the assessment results favor certain colleagues over others based on factors other than ability. It is important for such cases that assessors be objective in their marking; in order to avoid any feelings of animosity between students, as well as any complaints of biased marking (Moura, Graça, MacPhail, Batista, & Pedagogy, 2021).

2. Single Data Point Assessment

Good assessment practice places more emphasis on the assessment of learning rather than on the assessment for learning. Therefore, there is greater precedence given to summative assessments over assessments that are taken over a shorter period. In such cases students do not get the opportunity to learn from and rectify their mistakes, rather one final assessment ascertains their abilities (Khan, 2018).

3. Overconfident Assessor

It is the egotism of the assessor in his abilities based on his experience and intuition that student is judged pass or fail without the ritual of proper assessment process. It is commonly practiced in long case or viva voce, whereby asking a few questions of their own choice the assessor deduces what he believes are the student's capability (Tabish, 2008). Examiners may be set in old beliefs and maintain that that they do not require complicated assessments to ascertain which student is deserving.

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4. Focus on Statistics

There is a larger focus on statistics and improving the reliability coefficient by removing the MCQs based on Cronbach alpha if deleted to the extent that the point of the assessment becomes superfluous. In such cases, the overall objective as well as the important attributes of assessment may be forgone while trying to achieve a statistical significance that meets the requirements of a high-stake examination.

5. Reluctance to heed advice

The common reaction to educationalists, who are better equipped to understand teaching methods and assessment processes, 'interfering' in assessment matters is to tell them to stay away from the assessment practiced by the faculty. They are advised not to provide their expertise on the matter as institutes prefer continuing the way they always have been. They believe there is no reason to fix what, in their opinion, is not broken.

6. Refusal to change

This usually occurs when the administration has a laid-back attitude towards the assessment process. In this case, it is likely that assessment methods will be utilized based on ease of administration, despite the availability of evidently better and more valid alternative methods (Curtis & White, 2002).

7. Withholding information

This refers to the failure of faculties and exam boards to share pertinent information such as content, assessment objectives and decision-making processes with the candidates who are taking the examinations. It is imperative that the students know this information to know what is required of them and successfully attempt their exam. It is incorrect to assume that matching assessments to objectives is merely 'spoon feeding'.

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