

### TLC Project Assessment Case Study

<b>Assessment Strategy</b>	Oral Examination using question banks.
<b>Subject and module</b>	Sports Development Principles and Introduction to Sport & Exercise Physiology (both level 1 of separate BSc programmes)
<b>Useful for students who are:</b>	Undertaking a knowledge based assessment. Undertaking work where instant feedback on performance is desirable.
<b>Keywords</b>	Oral examination, viva voce, communication, interview
<b>Assessment activity</b>	<p>An oral examination procedure was piloted in both subjects in 2003/4 that replaced an exam using a multi choice question (MCQ) format. This has been refined and developed further and these current procedures and its implications are reported in this case study.</p> <p>Students are allocated a 30-minute period for assessment, which they attend in pre-allocated groups of 3. Three learning outcomes were assessed with each student physically taking questions, written on laminated strips, from 'question banks' (typically 15 questions per learning outcome). Two questions are taken each 'round' but the student chooses which of the two questions they answer; they respond in turns – with each student taking a total of 10 questions and responding to 5. Tutors have written prompts or clarifications available for each question.</p> <p>A pro-forma marking sheet (included in Appendix 1) is used to grade (0-5 marks) the student's response to each chosen question using the written marking criteria, so an overall mark obtained for each student. The overall pass mark of 10 (40%) is used and borderline students, i.e. having scored 9 (36%) are allocated a final pass/fail question from questions on the learning outcome they have proved weakest.</p>
<b>How does this assessment improve student learning?</b>	<p>In the questionnaire feedback half of the students (49%) responded positively to the statement: 'Did the prospect of being directly questioned and challenged encourage you to prepare more or less thoroughly than a traditional exam?' This suggests that the process motivates many students, particularly women (see above), to prepare more thoroughly than for a written exam which is marked away</p>

	<p>from the student. Most students recognise the close vocational links with this type of assessment. That is that in a work situation they may have to justify themselves face-to-face. However, the pilot study data on special needs students (see below, 'implications for dyslexic students') suggests that there is a preference for this form of assessment but this is only slightly more than the cohort average.</p> <p>This is supported by typical student comments from tutorials such as "It was a good way of testing knowledge as you had to be really prepared and have answers ready to say".</p>
<p><b>Underpinning theory links</b></p>	<p>Non-verbal effects in an oral testing environment Seddon and Pedrosa (1990); standardisation of the interview procedure to ensure reliability and validity (Brown, 2001); assessing students by encouraging them to talk to tutors about what they know has a motivational impact on their studies (Joughin, 1998)</p>
<p><b>What went well</b></p>	<p><b>Staff feedback</b> The depth of knowledge tested using this method is felt to be greater than using MCQs. Despite early hesitancy from staff over the reliability of this approach, a consensus has emerged that it is effective in discriminating between stronger and weaker students; staff appreciate that those more confident in speaking have an advantage and it is observed that mature students with such skills particularly excel. Staff also recognise that oral communication is an important graduate skill and that not all assessed work has to be written. The operation of the oral examinations has become more consistent and efficient with clearly established protocols and scheduling patterns established.</p> <p><b>Student feedback</b> Feedback was obtained using two methods: from ongoing discussions during tutorials and a questionnaire during the pilot year. The questionnaire produced two headline responses: there was agreement (56% compared to 13% who disagreed) that this method of assessment is more closely linked to the skills in the work place than a traditional exam; 64% of females (compared to only 39% of males) felt they needed to revise more for the oral assessment than for traditional exams, a finding that was statistically significant (<math>P = 0.038</math>).</p>

	Tutorial feedback suggests that there is acceptance of the method amongst the student cohort and since it is a new assessment compared to those previously encountered at school/college it has helped to motivate students.
<b>What could be improved</b>	<p>The issue of question consistency and level of difficulty within the question banks was initially raised. This requires careful preparation and wording of questions has improved with experience.</p> <p>There is also the issue of staff consistency. Additional cues and clarification available for each question has been controlled and standardised to help ensure greater consistency between examiners, but the modes of encouragement via body language, such as head gestures and facial expressions are likely to vary between staff.</p>
<b>What support for staff is needed to implement this method of assessment?</b>	A staff training session, ideally using video footage of an oral examination session, is needed to develop consistency in running uniform examination and marking protocols. Awareness of body language and non-verbal cues needs to be raised in this context.
<b>What support for students is needed to implement this method of assessment?</b>	Implementing this change in assessment is clearly intimidating to less confident students and therefore, some mock element is needed in order to show participants what to expect and to allow some practice if possible. This could be run using a 'goldfish bowl' approach in a lecture or seminar or by using a video example. The opportunity for nervous students to practice with a tutor in a non-assessed situation should be offered.
<b>What are the time implications?</b>	<p>Preparatory work is involved in setting up the protocols and a question bank for this assessment method e.g. questions need to be phrased appropriately to allow an open response that could be graded (1-5). However, this is compensated by the reduction in time spent marking exams. It should be emphasised that this is an investment made at the start of using this method and time saving the benefits accrue in subsequent years. Organisation, discipline, and a team of staff to tackle large student cohorts in one day are needed</p> <p>For the largest unit (Physiology - 115 students) four parallel 'panels' operate from 9.15 a.m. to 15.30 p.m. on one day with appropriate comfort and lunch breaks built</p>

	into the programme. The four panels are staffed with six tutors, two of whom operate in a visiting double marking role ensuring that each of the panels are moderated.
<b>Other resource implications?</b>	<p>Organisation, discipline, and a team of staff to examine the whole student cohort in one day is needed</p> <p>Ideally an audio tape would be audio made of the student examination process for external sample moderation.</p>
<b>What are the risks?</b>	<p>The more introverted students can feel intimidated by such an approach.</p> <p>Inconsistencies in the staff approach.</p>
<b>How can these be minimised?</b>	<p>Identify and encourage students who may be nervous to attend a 'mock' session where the outcome (mark) is not important but an appreciation and understanding of the process is.</p> <p>Staff training and a written procedure</p>
<b>Implications for dyslexic students?</b>	Those with special learning needs responded significantly differently ( $P = 0.017$ ) and more positively to the questionnaire (36% thought oral methods was more valid, 14% less valid) than the general student cohort when considering the validity of the oral examination compared to traditional exams. Students with dyslexia prompted adjustments to the protocol by suggesting allowing the use of paper and pen to collect their thoughts before responding.
<b>Institution where this was trialed</b>	University of Portsmouth
<b>Lecturer</b>	Ben Oakley ben.oakley@port.ac.uk
<b>CATS</b>	10
<b>Level</b>	1
<b>Compulsory/optional</b>	Compulsory
<b>Relationship to other modules</b>	Core module that provides underpinning knowledge and vocabulary for further study.
<b>Delivery pattern</b>	<p>Sport Development -10 lectures + 10 seminars</p> <p>Physiology -10 lectures + 3 laboratory sessions (1 assessed)</p>
<b>Student profile Year 2004/5</b>	<p>Sport Development</p> <p>n = 36</p> <p>male – 20</p>

	<p>female – 16 International – info not collected Special needs – 3</p> <p>Physiology n = 111 male – 79 female – 32 International – info not collected Special needs - 12</p>
<b>Learning outcomes assessed</b>	<p>Sport Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the rationale and justification for encouraging sport development</li> <li>2. Explain the role and skills of Sports Development Officers</li> <li>3. Outline the characteristics and motivations of sports participation</li> </ol> <p>Physiology</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outline the need for homeostatic control of the human body and explain how this is affected by exercise.</li> <li>2. Describe how the various systems of the body are inter-dependent and affected by exercise</li> <li>3. Explain key physiological terms, nomenclature and notation</li> </ol>
<b>References</b>	<p>Non-verbal effects in an oral testing environment Seddon and Pedrosa (1990); standardisation of the interview procedure to ensure reliability and validity (Brown, 2001); assessing students by encouraging them to talk to tutors about what they know has a motivational impact on their studies (Joughin, 1998)</p>

**Assessment Brief and Assessment criteria to be attached**

