

Creating Authentic Assessments: A Method for the Authoring of Open Book Open Web Examinations

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Overview

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4. Summary and conclusions

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1. TIME FOR A CHANGE?

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Does this
resemble
any real
world
setting?

Constructive alignment (Biggs 1999)

Is there is constructive alignment between the traditional examination instrument, term time pedagogy and defined learning outcomes?

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How often do people solve problems in the work place by locking themselves in a room for 3 hours with no books, no web access, not talking to anyone, answering MCQs?

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The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962)



Source: www.emory.edu/EDUCATION/mfp/Kuhnsnap.html

Thomas Kuhn

What's
changed
in the last
800 years?

The extent of the paradigm shift?

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Is a closed book,
invigilated exam an
assessment instrument
more likely to foster
cramming/data dumping,
or deep learning?

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How many articles have been published in leading educational journals over the last 25 years extolling the virtues of closed book, invigilated examinations?

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2. THE SCEPTICS

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*You have to invigilate
assessment because it's
the only way we know
for sure that they aren't
cheating*

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Seldom observed points...

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1) Students cheat during invigilated exams

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2) In the adult learner context, only a small percentage will attempt to cheat – why pander to the lowest common denominator?

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3. OBOW EXAMS

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What is an OBOW exam?

- A semi-structured 'mini-case (or 'caselette')
- Harnesses the power of ICTs to emphasise currency and real world authenticity
- A summative assessment item
- Invites the student to draw on all that they have learnt (determining what is relevant).

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Getting started

- Keep a look out for material all the time (not exam time!)
- e.g. Local newspaper, periodical websites, magazines, television news or current affairs programmes

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What to look for

- A 'story' that learners can easily relate to in lay terms
- Objective: to get them to ***think conceptually*** about an issue
- Student as 'expert witness' – an effective mechanism for the validation of their learning in their own minds

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Creating a scenario

- Having settled on a theme, gather together various media that can bring the case to life
- The inclusion of hyperlinks, photographs and/or streaming media adds a human dimension => authenticity

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Setting the task

- Role play – the bridge between a learner's education and their professional practice
- Placing the learner in the role of the key decision maker, the expert advisor, or the auditor serves to validate the student's learning
- Revisit the stated learning outcomes
- ... *what skills should they have?*

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Defining the parameters

- The definition of the assessment task might amount to no more than a paragraph
- Ideally it should invite a wide of variety of 'equally correct' answers
- Avoid 'spoon-feeding'
- Not so unstructured a student is either struck by 'writers' block' or goes off on a tangent.

Laying down the ground rules

- 1) Ensure the time period for the exam is sufficiently tight
- 2) Make it clear (as a stated objective of the subject) that critical analysis rather than recall of content knowledge is the key to success
- 3) Make exams as course unit specific as possible.

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"MY TERM PAPER HAS HYPertext LINKS, FULL-SCREEN VIDEO CLIPS, ANIMATED FONTS, AND AWESOME 3D SPECIAL EFFECTS... NOW ALL I NEED IS A TOPIC."

- Studies show stimulation with audio will increase retention rate by 20%. If stimulated with audiovisual, memory retention climbs to 30%. If presented with interactive multimedia involvement, the retention rate can be as high as 60%.

-- Tay Vaughan from *Multimedia: Making it Work*, 5th Edition, 2001 (ISBN: 0-07-219095-7)

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4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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***O**BOW exams ...*

- A form of assessment that fosters understanding of learning processes in terms of real-life performance as opposed to a display of inert knowledge
- Test analytical skills not memory

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What OBOW exams deliver...

- An assessment instrument that is more relevant to goals of the curriculum
- Greater authenticity, where real-world problems take centre-stage
- Allow ICTs to be harnessed to encourage interaction
- More equitable (esp. E2L students)
- Student engagement with the assessment task => induces deeper learning.

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Student comment

If students are intent on cheating they will do it no matter what the format of the exam. An open book exam is not going to encourage anyone to cheat who would not normally have done so.

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Cheating?

- No examination system is perfect
- And if two systems produce roughly equal opportunities for cheating?
- ... **pick the system that delivers better learning outcomes!**

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