

2014

Observation

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Recommended Citation

Duffy, G. (2020) Observation, Learning, Teaching & Technology Centre , Technological University Dublin.

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Assessment & Feedback Use Cases

OBSERVATION

Author: Gavin Duffy

Date: 2014

This use case describes how one assessment method was designed and implemented by a lecturer or a group of lecturers in DIT. The use case was compiled from an interview conducted as part of **DIT's RAFT project (2013-14)**, the aim of which was to provide a database of assessment practices designed and implemented by academic staff across DIT.



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Lecturer and Contact Details

Gavin Duffy

Programme and year on which assessment was offered

- BE Electrical / Electronic Engineering, Year 3
- BEngTech Electrical and Control Engineering, Year 2

Description

Observation – get engagement with group learning process, group discussions and self directed phase. Their actions dictate learning. The tutor must try to gauge learning through monitoring interaction.

Why did you use this assessment?

I feel they don't understand what their role is. This is an attempt to get them to a point where they can become confident in that method of learning. The tutor observes student interaction and then gives pointers to fill the gaps in knowledge or understanding.

Why did you change to this form of assessment?

Followed from change to PBL structure. This method supports the change.

How do you give feedback to students?

Primarily verbal, individually during group meetings. Give them examples of where they have done well and aspects they can improve on. Feedback and mark provided.

There are several questions about this method that should be considered:

- Should the feedback be group/individual?
- Should it be formative feedback or a mark?

What have you found are the advantages of using this form of assessment?

- Gives students a sense of what is expected
- Prompt feedback – allowing students to adjust to suit the method
- Students need to buy in to the process
- Quick and dirty feedback
- Thinking about performance

What have you found are the dis-advantages of using this form of assessment?

- Difficult to catch students in action
- Observation timing is difficult as you just get a sample of interaction which is not necessarily representative of overall engagement
- This is a qualitative procedure but a definitive mark is required
- Time required

If another lecturer was using this assessment method would you have any tips for them?

Do: talk to others to ensure understanding of philosophy, ensure to match epistemology/learning approach, make it sustainable, give it a go, read Alverno framework for self assessment, run 30 minute session “How to...”, formative and resubmit for low marks.

Don't: get hung up on accuracy (if learning happening all else will follow), take laborious notes, large student groups, time pressure, make it longer than 1 page

Do you have any feedback from students about this assessment?

During a focus group there appeared to be confusion about expectations. Independent learning is difficult for some. Mixed responses dependent on learner epistemology.