

Designing Assessment with the Assessment Design Decisions Framework

Associate Professor Phillip Dawson

Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning



Centre for Research in
Assessment and Digital Learning

deakin.edu.au/learning/enhancing-your-practice/cradle



Support for assessment practice: developing the Assessment Design Decisions Framework

Margaret Bearman^a, Phillip Dawson^{*b}, David Boud^{c,d,g}, Sue Bennett^e, Matt Hall^f and Elizabeth Molloy^a

High Educ (2017) 74:49–64
DOI 10.1007/s10734-016-0027-7



How university teachers design assessments: a cross-disciplinary study

Margaret Bearman¹ · Phillip Dawson² · Sue Bennett³ ·
Matt Hall⁴ · Elizabeth Molloy¹ · David Boud^{2,5} ·
Gordon Joughin⁶

We know a lot about ideal practice

Table 3: Ranking of effects relevant to higher education

Rank	Domain	Influence
1	Student	Self-report grades
3	Teaching	Providing formative evaluation to lecturers
8	Teacher	Teacher clarity
9	Teaching	Reciprocal teaching
10	Teaching	Feedback
12	Teaching	Spaced vs. Mass Practice
13	Teaching	Meta-cognitive strategies
17	Curricula	Creativity Programs
18	Teaching	Self-verbalisation/Self-questioning
19	Teacher	Professional development
20	Teaching	Problem solving teaching
21	Teacher	Not Labelling students
24	Teaching	Cooperative vs. individualistic learning

Hattie, 2009

Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage

ARE MULTIPLE CHOICE
EXAMS AN ACCURATE MEASURE
OF ONE'S KNOWLEDGE?

- A. YES
- B. A AND C
- C. A AND B
- D. ALL OF THE ABOVE



© 2009 BY DOUG SAVAGE

www.savagechickens.com

**Actual
practice is
different**

Research suggests ...

- Changing assessment ‘thinking’ in academics doesn’t necessarily change practice (Offerdahl & Tomanek, 2011)
- “...achieving a balance between summative and formative assessment requires complex, contextual thinking” (Price, et al., 2011)



Focus on assessment design

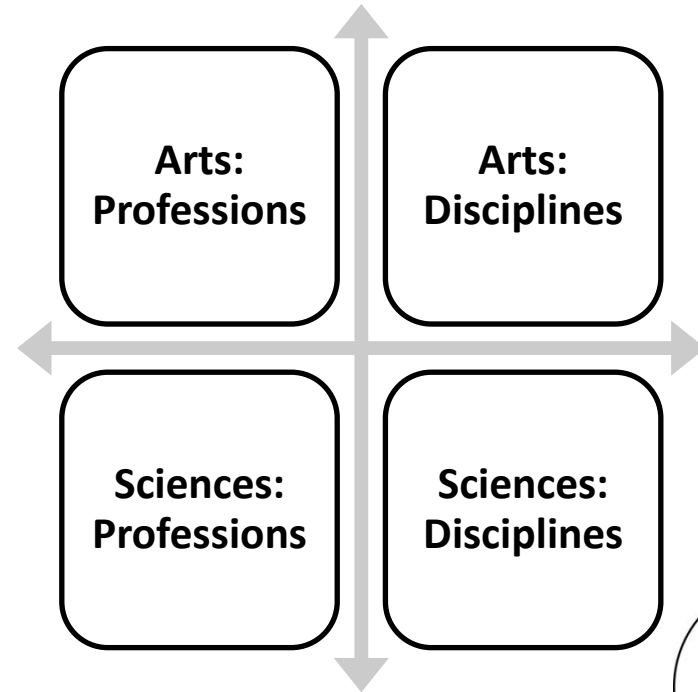
- Assessment policy and procedures
- **Decisions in the design and implementation of assessment**
- Judgements about student work

‘assessment design’



Research design

- 31 semi-structured interviews
- Thematic analysis
- Presences and absences



Framework design

- Joined research data with conceptual frameworks, and literature
- Drew from own experience as expert practitioners
- Oriented towards educators' agency rather than prescriptive



The Assessment Design Decisions Framework



assessmentdecisions.org/framework/



Purposes of assessment

How can assessment:

1. support student learning
2. generate grades that will form part of subsequent certification
3. equip learners in making future judgements?



Context

- Which of the following attributes needs to be considered in assessment design?
- What specifically about each can be taken into account?
How can tensions between different needs be reconciled?
- Characteristics of learners/students
- Institutional assessment principles and policies
- Professional, vocational or employment-related requirements
- Departmental, disciplinary and personal norms, expectations and ideas
- Overall program and role of the unit/module
- Learning environment, e.g. class size or mode (online/face-to-face/blended).



Learner Outcomes

How does assessment align with, and promote, desired student outcomes, including:

1. unit/module learning outcomes;
2. overall program learning outcomes
3. professional requirements; and
4. students' general professional or intellectual development.



Tasks

- Students need to engage with a range of tasks to: develop and demonstrate their learning.
- What is the rationale for each task?
- How do the tasks drive learning? What do the tasks specifically require learners to do?
- How will successful completion be judged?
- How are tasks best distributed across the semester?
- How will students contribute?
- Which tasks will be graded?



Feedback processes

- How are multiple feedback opportunities achieved through the distribution and relationship of tasks across the unit/module/overall program?
- What types of feedback information will be provided and by whom?
- How will learner performance be used to influence the (re)design of later tasks?



Interactions

- How will resistance or engagement from learners or colleagues influence assessment processes?
- How will learners understand what is required in the assessment task(s)?
- What information will be needed to improve this assessment for subsequent occasions?
- What associated changes in teaching and learning activities will be required?



More information



FRAMEWORK

An overview of the Assessment Design Decisions Framework: supporting university educators design good assessment.

[View Framework →](#)



GUIDE

The Assessment Design Decisions Framework explained in detail. Including explanations, online resources and educator experiences.

[View Guide →](#)



5 INSIGHTS

Five propositions about supporting assessment practice for learning and teaching leadership in higher education.

[View Insights →](#)



EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Workshops and research relating to the Assessment Design Decisions Framework.

[View E & P →](#)

References

- Hattie, J., *The Black Box of Tertiary Assessment: An Impending Revolution, in Tertiary Assessment & Higher Education Student Outcomes: Policy, Practice & Research*, L.H. Meyer, et al., Editors. 2009, Ako Aotearoa: Wellington, New Zealand.
- Offerdahl, E. G., & Tomanek, D. (2011). Changes in instructors' assessment thinking related to experimentation with new strategies. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 36(7), 781-795. doi: 10.1080/02602938.2010.488794
- Price, M., Carroll, J., O'Donovan, B., & Rust, C. (2011). If I was going there I wouldn't start from here: a critical commentary on current assessment practice. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 36(4), 479-492. doi: 10.1080/02602930903512883

