

The Issue

It's a challenge designing assessments that foster the development of transferable and sophisticated capabilities. But the one thing that students will focus on is assessment so by getting that right you set students up for powerful learning.

Teachers' questions and what we learnt

What does exhibit mean??

It means having students produce useful artefacts as evidence that they have addressed real problems using their capabilities.

Why is producing tackling real problems and producing artefacts important?

It's important for all of these reasons:

- It's a great way to demonstrate to students that your course is equipping them with useful capabilities.
- It provides tangible products that students can use to illustrate their talent to employers.
- It gives students something they can be proud of, something you can celebrate.
- It provides an efficient assessment regime so that multiple capabilities taught in a course can be assessed within a single assignment

But most importantly:

- It fosters the learning and the development of integrated and transferable capabilities.

What else do I need to be mindful of if I'm assessing future ready employability capabilities?

It is a good practice to involve employers in your assessment design. Before you set an assignment, they can advise on the relevance of the tasks, the kinds of feedback they give and the levels of performance expected. During an assignment their presence as advisors or judges can make the whole exercise more 'real' to students. Remember though, employers might focus on what graduates need now. You and your students might have an idea about what capabilities might be needed in a few years' time.

So how do I go about designing assessments that involve authentic tasks, real problems and artefacts when I'm in a discipline that does not feed into a profession?

This all hinges on having specified exactly which capabilities are being taught and to what level. Once you know exactly what performances you need to evidence, you can design a task that involves using as many of these capabilities as possible to address one coherent problem. Then it's about building the feedback and assessment regime around it.

Here are a few ideas to start you off:

- **Communication:** Swop the essay or test for building a website, a memo, a blog, making a podcast, designing an infographic.
- **Applying thinking:** Ask students to draw parallels between events or ideas in your discipline and current affairs or issues to predict outcomes or generate advice.
- **Collaboration:** Try setting up robust and fair group assessments so students work in teams
- **Independence:** Have students use employability relevant problem solving and project management techniques to address issues in your discipline. Set reflective and review tasks so students get in the habit of thinking about performance and how to improve it.

Analysis

Read these questions to see if you are trying to develop employability capabilities through your assessment design.

Questions for teaching staff

- Do you provide opportunities to create artefacts that can be used in society or the workplace or by students in their future job seeking or early careers?
- Do you provide opportunities to use multiple and integrated employability capabilities to undertake authentic assessment tasks?
- Do students explore the relevance of any assessment to employability?
- Do you invite student input into assessment design and provide choice so students are solving problems that are relevant?
- Do you secure industry advice on assessment design and delivery to ensure relevance to employability?
- Do you assure relevance and level by developing industry-informed criteria, rubrics, and scripts that transparently guide judgments?
- Do you develop systems to support the validity of student peer to peer evaluations and self-assessments in light of industry standards?
- Do you provide opportunities for students to receive meaningful individual feedback from competent judges early enough to guide learning?
- Do you invite industry input in either the guise of customers, mentors or judges?
- Do you provide ways to recognise and celebrate achievements, ideally, publicly and with industry?
- Do you facilitate alumni and/or industry familiarisation or networking opportunities and potentially access to employment opportunities?

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