

REDEFINING ASSESSMENT: IMPLEMENTING LARGE-SCALE VIVA VOCE EXAMS IN ANATOMY COURSES

Jack Mayhew^a, John F. Bertram^a, Reyhan Akhtar^a, Kim Catania^a, Frances Broomhead^b, Michelle Lazarus^{a,c}, Chantal Hoppe^a

Presenting Author: Jack Mayhew (jack.mayhew@monash.edu)

^a Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology, Biomedicine Discovery Institute, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Clayton VIC 3800, Australia;

^b Biomedicine Discovery Institute, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Clayton VIC 3800, Australia

^c Centre for Human Anatomy Education, Biomedicine Discovery Institute, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Clayton VIC 3800, Australia

KEYWORDS: Authentic assessment, large cohort, academic integrity

SUBTHEME: Modes of Learning

PROBLEM Authentic assessment is increasingly recommended across higher education, but guidelines for implementing such assessments - especially in large cohorts (>300 students) - is lacking. The goal of this work is to identify strategies for achieving authentic assessments in a manner that considers academic integrity, workplace authenticity, and staff workload.

PLAN We introduced viva voce exams as non-hurdle assessments. Viva voce exams directly assessed students' knowledge and communication skills in a simulated real-world scenario mimicking that of a health profession workplace. This approach minimizes students' reliance on potentially biased artificial intelligence-generated content, and reduces the risk of plagiarism compared to traditional written assessments. Furthermore, viva voce exams offer a potentially streamlined marking process with several advantages. First, marking can be largely instantaneous, as examiners can assess performance and assign grades during the exam itself. Second, the entire viva can be recorded (audio and video) which provides valuable evidence for both students and instructors. This recording can be used for review, dispute resolution, and potentially informing future teaching approaches.

ACTION To support successful rollout of viva voce exams, we developed adaptable strategies catering to two different student cohorts. **Comprehensive Evaluation (in a 2nd year Biomedical Science unit of 600 students):** A single, in-depth 8-minute station with one examiner allows for a detailed assessment of student knowledge across a broad range of anatomical content. **Broad Evaluation with Specialization (in a 2nd year Science unit of >300 students):** Three shorter stations (3 minutes each) featuring examiners with specialized knowledge in specific anatomical areas (musculoskeletal anatomy, thoracic anatomy & development, nervous system anatomy & histology) provide a wider evaluation while allowing examiners to leverage their expertise. **Streamlined Logistics:** Clear staff roles are assigned for check-in, marshalling, briefing, assessment, data entry, and video recording, ensuring smooth execution regardless of the chosen format.

Targeted Student Preparation: Scaffolding is provided through strategically designed viva practice sessions, mock vivas, and targeted preparation resources, equipping students for success in the format they encounter.

REFLECTION The viva voce assessments boasted high attendance rates (95% BMS2011, 91% DEV2022) and positive student feedback regarding the experience's authenticity (75% of DEV2022 students that answered a survey, agreed it effectively or very-effectively prepared them for their professional future). However, concerns regarding time constraints and performance anxiety were noted. Strengths included reduced academic integrity issues, authentic assessment experience, and focused marking period, however, confirmatory review and marker validation remained essential.

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