

Authentic Assessment

Poster Presentation



DEFINITION

Poster presentations can be used as an assessment method to allow students to demonstrate their understanding in a visual way, presenting content and/or research findings of a particular topic on a poster. A good poster is expected to have engaging content, as well as good and clear visuals. Images and graphs are often key visual elements in posters.

Posters can be presented digitally and shared through online platforms, allowing assessors and peers to assess them both synchronously and asynchronously. Question-and-answer sessions that follow poster presentations also allow students to address questions raised from others the poster viewers, while also facilitating and supporting the exchange of ideas.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

To design a poster presentation assessment, teachers should follow the procedures below:

1. Inform students of the primary objectives of the poster presentation assessment.
2. Provide students with details of the poster presentation, including the poster requirements and the time frame, location, and platform of the presentation.
3. Introduce students to the marking criteria of the poster presentation.
4. Train students' abilities to select and summarize crucial information for their poster and presentation.
5. Facilitate peer assessment to allow students to receive prompt and peer feedback for their poster presentation.



BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

Benefits

- Poster presentations can encourage creativity.
- Poster assessments are short and succinct. Students are required to think carefully and deeply in order to select the key information to be displayed. Teachers can likewise evaluate students' summarizing abilities.
- Peers and assessors can assess posters at different times without the presence of the poster creators.

Challenges

- The effectiveness of a poster assessment depends on whether students are guided by clear assessment criteria. If students are assessed on generic skills separately to poster content (e.g., creativity and presentation skills), teachers should ensure that students are able to have enough practice demonstrating such skills before the actual assessment.
- Instead of focusing on the content of the poster, both students and teachers may place too much emphasis on the aesthetic aspects and appeal of the poster.

CASE SAMPLE

Poster presentation assessment in Internship Unit AMB310 and LWB420 in Queensland University of Technology

Design of the assessment:

At the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), poster presentations were used as an assessment method in two internship units from the Faculty of Business and the Faculty of Law.

In the first unit (Business), each student was required to use text, images, and photographs to prepare a poster (A0 to A2 size). The poster presented a brief overview of their internship experience and their reflections on it. Before beginning their designs, students were given information about effective ways to create posters and exemplars to use as reference.

In the second unit (Law), students were required to select a topic related to their internship as the focus of their poster. They then presented their posters at a presentation session with an audience including supervising lawyers, academics, members of the wider QUT community, and other legal practitioners. Students also had to submit an abstract describing their poster and a 1-page handout introducing their poster presentation. Similar to the other unit, students in this unit were provided with guidelines and poster exemplars to assist them with completing the assessment task.

How are students assessed?

The poster presentations in this case study utilized a criterion-referenced assessment.

For students in the business unit, there were three equally-weighted criteria including: (1) the poster presentation, (2) the poster content, and (3) audience engagement. For each criterion, students were graded as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Students needed a satisfactory rating in all three criteria to pass the assessment task overall.

For students in the law unit, there were eight criteria including: (1) significance of the topic, (2) abstract, (3) choice of content, (4) critical analysis of issues, (5) research, (6) referencing, (7) visual appearance, and (8) organization of poster. Each criterion was assessed using a 7-point scale. The criteria were weighted; visual appearance and organization were together only worth 20% of the total marks of the assessment.

Reference

McNamara, J., Larkin, I., & Beatson, A. (2010). Using poster presentations as assessment of work integrated learning. In *Work Integrated Learning-Responding to Challenges: Proceedings of the 2010 ACEN National Conference* (pp. 314-322). Australian Collaborative Education Network.

TIPS FOR DESIGNING

- Ensure that students understand, clearly and in advance, the assessment criteria of the poster presentation.
- Prepare a structured marking sheet for all assessors before the poster presentation.