

The Effectiveness of Summative Assessment in Practice Learning

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Abstract : Assessment enables students to focus on their learning, assessment. It engages them to work hard and motivates them in devoting time to their studies. Student learning is directly influenced by the type of assessment involved in the programme. Summative Assessment aims at providing measurement of student understanding. In fact, it is argued that summative assessment is used for reporting and reviewing, besides providing an overall judgement of achievement. While summative assessment is a well defined process for learning that takes place in the classroom environment, its application within the practice environment is still being researched. This paper discusses findings from a mixed-method study for exploring the effectiveness of summative assessment in practice learning. A survey questionnaire was designed for exploring the perceptions of mentors and students about summative assessment in practice learning. The questionnaire was administered to the University of Mauritius students and mentors who supervised students for their Work-Based Learning (WBL) practice at the respective placement settings. Some students, having undertaken their WBL practice, were interviewed, for capturing their views and experiences about the application of summative assessment in practice learning. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with three experienced mentors who have assessed students on practice learning. The findings reveal that though learning in the workplace is entirely different from learning at the University, most students had positive experiences about their summative assessments in practice learning. They felt comfortable and confident to be assessed by their mentors in their placement settings and wished that the effort and time that they devoted to their learning be recognised and valued. Mentors on their side confirmed that the summative assessment is valid and reliable, enabling them to better monitor and coach students to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Keywords : practice learning, judgement, summative assessment, knowledge, skills, workplace

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