

Eleven conditions under which assessment supports student learning

Quantity and distribution of student effort

1. Assessed tasks capture sufficient study time and effort

This condition concerns whether your students study sufficiently out of class or whether the assessment system allows them to get away with not studying very much at all. This is the 'time on task' principle linked to the insight that it is assessment, and not teaching, that captures student effort.

2. These tasks distribute student effort evenly across topics and weeks

This condition is concerned with whether students can 'question spot' and avoid much of the curriculum, or stop turning up to class after the last assignment is due in.

Quality and level of student effort

3. These tasks engage students in productive learning activity

This condition is partly about whether the assessment results in students taking a deep or surface approach and also about quality of engagement in general.

4. Assessment communicates clear and high expectations to students

This is partly about articulating explicit goals that students understand and can orient themselves towards, and partly about the level of perceived challenge.

The remaining conditions concern feedback.

Quantity and timing of feedback

5. Sufficient feedback is provided, both often enough and in enough detail
6. The feedback is provided quickly enough to be useful to students

Quality of feedback

7. Feedback focuses on learning rather than on marks or students themselves
8. Feedback is linked to the purpose of the assignment and to criteria
9. Feedback is understandable to students, given their sophistication

Student response to feedback

10. Feedback is received by students and attended to
11. Feedback is acted upon by students to improve their work or their learning

ⁱ Gibbs, G. (2006) How assessment frames student learning, in Bryan, C. & Clegg, K. (Eds) Innovative Assessment in Higher Education, Routledge, Abingdon. Pp 28 - 30