

CASE STUDY 16 - SUMMARY

NAME

Celeste de Vaal

LEVEL

Undergraduate

COURSE

PTY6012W - Forensic Medicine

CATEGORY

Expanding, enhancing and adapting

FACULTY

Health Sciences

One sentence summary

The assessment tasks and end-of-block exam were moved online and redesigned to include well-crafted questions that covered a broader range of topics, and could be marked electronically. ERT provided the opportunity to improve the assessment practices which will be used going forward.



Context

The two-week forensic medicine course is part of a four-week block in Year 6 of the MBChB programme. It is run in combination with Anaesthetics. Final year students had to be on campus in 2020, so the exam was online synchronous and in-person. Time constraints moving online meant the presentations had to fall away and the other assessments carried a higher weighting to compensate. Online assignments were developed requiring students to complete fillable PDF forms and submit these online. For some, this was an issue because they struggled to upload documents that had very large file sizes.



Purpose:

The course has six formative tasks which counted 40% towards the course mark. These were based mainly on medicolegal documents which students needed to complete as junior doctors. This was the same pre-ERT, but in ERT the majority of tasks were moved online. There was also a summative end-of-block exam, which counted 60% towards the course mark, and which had to be redesigned in ERT in order to allow time between exams for COVID protocols.



Process

The exam previously consisted of short-answer questions presented online, but answers had to be written and submitted in exam books. This was

always confusing for students and extra work for examiners. ERT provided the impetus and time to change the exam format to be written online with more MCQ, single-best-answer and extended-matching-answer type questions, which could be marked automatically with only one page of written answers.



Outcomes/ Lessons learned

The format of assessments is fundamental to how students learn (e.g. covering a broad range of topics if they know the assessment is MCQ). Changing the exam format took a lot of time initially, but it made sense logistically and in terms of marking time, and will be used going forward. Also, having the time to focus on assessment and knowing what resources are available is key. Overall, the changes have improved the assessment practices. Once the question pool has been built up, it will be less labour-intensive to set up the exams. Setting an assignment involving asking students to set 5 single-best-answer questions also works well and is a good gauge of student understanding. Without the student presentations, there was an element of peer-learning missing; hence, these were re-introduced.



Recommendation

Using well-crafted MCQ and single-best-answer questions means that a large base of core topics can be covered in less time, thus maintaining the standard and meeting the course objectives.