Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework (ED-GL-061)

RCPI has a long history and a reputation for excellence in the provision of postgraduate medical training programmes across a range of specialties. RCPI also provides an extensive suite of education programmes that support clinicians in their ability to be effective, innovative, patient centred and to lead out on practice.

A core element in the development of learning through education is assessment. In this regard, RCPI has built a strong capacity and knowledge base in planning and assessing learner development. Assessment strategies are carefully and holistically aligned to intended programme learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skill and professional competence. Assessment is acknowledged as both a developmental tool (formative assessment) and a high stakes decision making process in terms of career progression (summative assessment). Assessment is seen as an integral part of learning, in terms of learning opportunities, formative assessment and feedback, summative assessment and progression.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment represents RCPIs core activities. We aim to maintain excellence in these areas as they are critical for learner success. Without their constant prioritisation RCPI cannot remain competitive.

RCPI Graduate Attributes

In RCPI our learners work within a multidisciplinary context in the health service who work within a complex environment. Our learners are post graduate healthcare professionals who come to RCPI for specialist education as their workplace changes or as their career develops

A learner who graduates from RCPI will have acquired an education at an advanced level, including both specialist knowledge and general intellectual skills that will equip them in their roles as healthcare professionals within the Health Service in Ireland. Our graduates are professional, knowledgeable, agents of change who are innovative and collaborative.

Professional	Knowledgeable	Agents of Change

Innovative	Collaborative

Professional – Our graduates are confident, committed, and responsible individuals. They are self-directed, empathetic and ethical.

Knowledgeable – Our graduates are competent, qualified individuals who have an excellent specialist knowledge within their field. They are lifelong learners who understand that learning is a continuous process and is an extremely important in every aspect of their careers.

Agents of change – Our graduates are flexible and adaptable with a diversified knowledge that allows them to acclimate themselves to the changes within their work environment. They are excellent communicators, reflective and analytical.

Innovative – Our graduates are critical thinkers; they are curious and creative. They seize opportunities, take initiative and are proactive.

Collaborative – Our graduates are academic and work well as part of a team. They display high levels of both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. They are open minded when working with others and are receptive to feedback.

RCPIs Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Teaching, learning and assessment is acknowledged as an interdependent and dynamic processes in which each element serves to complement the other and ultimately the development and progression of the learner. Constructive alignment of teaching, learning and assessment with learning outcomes as described by Biggs (1996) is at the heart of this process. Constructive alignment of assessment criteria and methods with learning outcomes provides the learner

with a clear description of what they need to achieve as well as a supportive mechanism to get there. It is also a statement of commitment by faculty to sound educational modalities and effective assessment in the provision of the programme.

In RCPI our learners are postgraduate healthcare professionals, we have designed our teaching, learning and assessment strategy in line with this. We adopted Diana Laurillard's Conversational Framework (2002) as well as the paradigm developed by Biggs (1999) to support an integrated method of learning. We consider the learning outcomes and our graduate attributes as the primary drivers in the selection of assessment instruments and learning activities. See Figure 1.
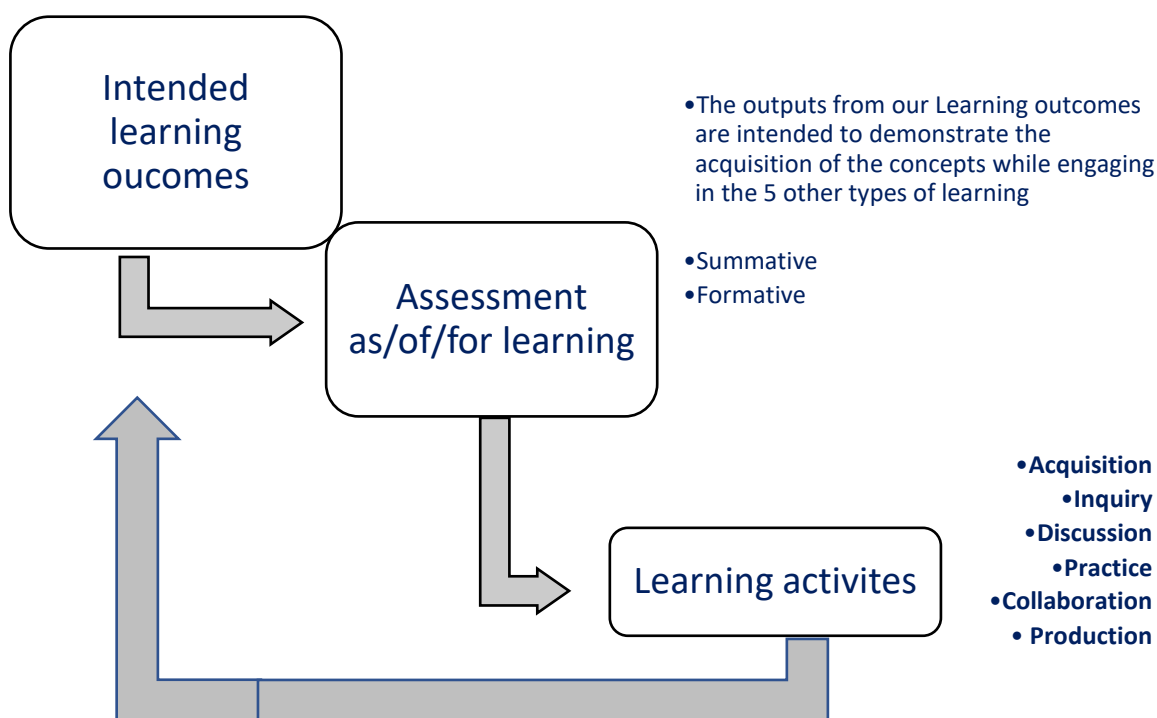

Figure 1 Constructive Alignment of Module 1 (Biggs with Activities as per Laurillard)

The learning materials and activities are considered further by exploration of Laurillard's Conversational Framework (2012) including the six types of learning. The design will integrate the different learning modalities using digital technology, the internet and live teaching, blended to allow the learners to discover the theories and methods and to apply them in their own context.

Learning types have proven to be a robust and accessible route into teaching and learning discussion and reflection and shows how pedagogically informed rapid development learning design is achievable. The six learning types are:

Acquisition (i.e.to read/watch/listen), Investigation, Practice, Discussion, Collaboration and Production. Each type of learning activity represents a cycle between learner and teacher, or learner and peers, at the concept and/or practice level. The role of the teacher then is to 'motivate the internal cycles generating and modulating the learner's concepts and practice, which is what facilitates learning' (2012, p. 86).

Due to our cadre of learners we used the learning types approach as it resonates with practice and stimulates rich pedagogical conversation. It is very important within RCPI that our learners have the opportunity to engage in rich conversation within our programmes as it directly links back to our graduate attributes such as developing agents of change. It also allows our learners to be collaborative.

Laurillad explains that the learning types approach are 'derived from conceptual learning, experiential learning, social constructivism, constructionism, and collaborative learning, and the corresponding principles for designing teaching and learning activities in the constructional design literature' (2012, p. 93). The 6 learning types are outlined in the graphic below in figure 3.

Acquistion
- Learning through acquistion is what learners are doing when they are listening to a lecture, reading a book or watching a video

Collaboration
- Learning through collaboration embraces mainly discussion, practice and production. Building on investigations and acquistions it is about taking part in the process of knowledge building itself

Discussion
- Learning through discussion requires the learner to articulate their ideas and questions, and to challenge and respond to the ideas and questions from the teacher, and/or from their peers.

Investigation
- Learning through investigation guides the learners to explore, compare and critique the texts, document and resources hat reflect the concepts and ideas being taught

Practice
- Learning through practice enables the learner to adapt their actions to the task goal, and use the feedback to improve their next action. Feedback may come from self-reflection, from peers, from faculty, or from the activity itself, if it shows them how to improve the result of their own action in relation to the goal

Production
- Learning through production is the way the faculty motivate the learner to consolidate what they have learned by articulating their current conceptual understanding and how they used it in practice

Figure 3: Models of learning, adapted from Young & Perović, ABC Learning Desgin (2020)

The 6 learning types are aligned with technological tools and options, as appropriate, that might be effectively utilised. A commitment to a robust pedagogical approach and the achievement of the minimum intended learning outcomes also underpin assessment, learner support and faculty support.

Assessment Types

Our learners work within an inherently complex environment and this must be considered in both the design of programme content, assessment and how learning might be applied. The healthcare profession utilises formative assessment and feedback as a teaching and learning approach informally within the workplace. Learners are accustomed to assessment for learning and the use of assessment as learning. Assessment for learning is an approach used in teaching and learning that creates feedback which is then used to improve learners performance. Feedback is expected from our learner cohorts and is considered as a mechanism to 'feed forward' future development and enhanced performance.

We use formative assessment such as reflective journals, peer to peer assessments, personal development plans to assess our learners. Reflective journals supports the idea that reflection is an essential practice in developing the graduate attribute of professional. We use peer to peer assessments as part of our pathway to developing the collaborative graduate attribute. Peer to peer assessment can deepen the learning experience as learners can learn a great deal about their own work from assessing other learners. These assessment types corresponds with the concept of assessment as learning which is the use of ongoing self-assessment by learners in order for them to self monitor their own learning.

We monitor assessment of learning though summative assessments such as assignments, multiple choice questionnaires to discover the learners achievement and to certify a learners competence within the learning goals of the programme.

Further information on assessment types is included within the Assessment and Grading Procedure (ED-SOP-077) .

Validity of our assessments

The validity of the assessment instruments and processes for our programmes are fit for purpose and have been designed with a focus on the attainment of the minimum intended learning outcomes. The reliability of the assessment instruments is supported by their perceived capacity to be consistent in terms of results. Overall the validity and reliability of the assessment instruments for the proposed programme are underpinned by the following:

- Alignment to programme and module learning outcomes
- Assessment instruments are criterion referenced
- A range of different assessment types are provided
- Assessment for learning, as learning and of learning is a fundamental consideration
- Assessments are inclusive and processes are supported by policy and procedures
- There is a commitment to ongoing monitoring
- Information for learners is transparent and comprehensive

References

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Biggs, J. (2014). Constructive alignment in university teaching. HERDSA Review of higher education, 1(1), 5-22.

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