

# Assessment in Problem-based Learning (PBL)

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## Abstract

*Problem-based learning (PBL), a relatively new approach to teaching, has been introduced in several of the medical schools in the Southeast Pacific region. This approach emphasises active, self-directed learning and puts the emphasis on the individual student and his/her role in the educational process. It is well known that assessment plays a large role in influencing student learning behaviour. Therefore, it is important that the assessment process not hamper learning or adversely affect attainment of the goals of the curriculum. If student behaviours are directed toward achieving success on the assessments, instructors' efforts to create a climate of self-directed learning and individual responsibility will be frustrated. This article provides information on the different classes of assessment vehicles available to assess the various domains of medical competence. We pay special attention to the critical relationship between the educational goals of problem-based learning and the different assessment instruments used. We briefly describe some assessment instruments and how it can relate to these goals in a positive manner. We conclude that no assessment instrument is ideal and that each has unique inherent deficiencies. As a consequence, a successful student assessment process requires use of several complementary instruments.*

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