

ASCILITE 2025

Future-Focused:

Educating in an Era of Continuous Change

Patience and partnership: A collaborative journey in iterative assessment evolution toward interactive oral assessments

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Artificial Intelligence creates challenges for assessment integrity and validity (Lodge et al., 2023). Interactive Oral Assessments (IOA) are emerging as an academically sound and pedagogically robust assessment option to address these challenges (Lodge, 2024) while also supporting student employability and communication skills (Ward et al., 2023). Further, studies show that students are less likely to engage in academic misconduct when undertaking IOA that are relevant to real-world situations (Sotiriadou et al., 2020).

Considering the above and recognising the power of collaboration, in 2024 a business school academic and educational designer commenced an iterative process to introduce IOA into a Postgraduate Management subject that is focused on career planning. The subject serves multiple Masters degree programs, and students come with varying levels of professional experience. IOA are uniquely suited to this subject as part of building student employability via enhancing the ability of students to articulate their knowledge, attributes, skills and experience (Daubney, 2022). IOA also support the development of students' communication capabilities, identified as a critical skill in graduate recruitment, with 88% of employers rating it as important and routinely assessed (Australian Association of Graduate Employers, 2020). IOA align with the Subject Learning Objectives (SLO's), which require students to persuasively communicate their skills, knowledge, and attributes to demonstrate their employability to a professional audience.

Previous assessments required students to reflect on their skills, knowledge, and experiences, develop a career plan, and submit a generic recorded career pitch. As IOA rely on authentic and genuine scenarios (Sotiriadou et al. 2025), an important first step was setting up a scenario that would resonate with the diverse cohort in the subject. In 2024, the recorded pitch assessment was adjusted to include a choice of scenarios tailored to the student personas typically enrolled in the subject. Students could choose to pitch for their first professional role; a lateral move; a promotion; or a career change. Student feedback was positive, particularly relating to the applicability of the assessment in supporting their career goals, which validated the authenticity and relevance of the scenarios.

In 2025 the pitch will be replaced with an IOA where students will participate in a conversation based on one of the four authentic scenarios enabling them to articulate their communication and employability skills (Logan et al. 2017; Sotiriadou et al. 2020), demonstrate understanding of key subject content (Ward et al., 2023), and fulfil the SLOs. To replicate the real-world scenario, educators will be prepared with a set of prompts, for example, to clarify content or probe on specific topics (Pearce & Chiavaroli, 2020).

Indicative results from 2025 implementation will be available for sharing at the conference. IOA effectiveness will be assessed via comparative student surveys, benchmarked year-on-year. Learnings will be applicable for academics and learning designers interested in exploring IOA, including how an iterative and collaborative design process can improve outcomes for all stakeholders, and how to manage diverse student groups. Findings may also contribute to the body of knowledge regarding IOA and their role in supporting student employability.

Keywords: Authentic Assessments, Collaborative Subject Design, Interactive Oral Assessments

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