The Fair-Assessment Quick-Audit

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Most training assessments produce completely meaningless results. Don't trust an assessment of learning if it doesn't follow the following heuristics.

Knowledge and Opportunities	Why?	Your Description of Your Situation and Efforts	Rate Your Compliance
1. If it's a Level 1 smile sheet, don't use it as the sole metric of learning. And be extremely suspicious of its results.	Smile sheets are very poor predictors of learning/performance.		Bad OK Good
2. In measuring Level 2 learning, utilize Level 2.5 scenario-based decisions. Don't use Level 2 knowledge questions unless that's what learners will need to remember for their jobs or lives.	Knowledge questions are not predictive of learners' ability to perform in realistic situations.		Bad OK Good
3. In measuring Level 2 learning, ensure that the assessment is provided in a context different than the context in which learning took place (unless the learning was done in the job context).	Assessments given in learning context bias the results in positive direction.		Bad OK Good
4. In measuring Level 2 learning, ensure that at least some testing is provided after a delay (not just at the end of learning).	Assessments given at end of learning don't measure forgetting.		Bad OK Good
5. If pretests are used, realize that they produce learning effects, so comparison groups must get pretests too, and any pretest-posttest comparisons may be biased.	Pretests prompt learners to attend more fully to some parts of the later learning material.		Bad OK Good
6. In deciding between using Level 2, 3, and 4 metrics, consider measuring the original goal of the learning intervention. For example, if the goal for a training program was to improve coaching behavior of managers, measure that.	Measuring your real goals is instantly credible to stakeholders and gives you authentic feedback.		Bad OK Good
7. Remember to distinguish between (a) assessments to support the learners and (b) assessments to measure either the effectiveness of the learning intervention or the learning of individual learners. Assessments to support learners should provide multiple spaced opportunities, feedback, and subsequent retrieval practice after initial failure.	Assessments have learning effects. Sometimes we can use assessments to facilitate learning AND give us good feedback, but this is not always the case.		Bad OK Good
8. Before designing learning interventions, create a list of "Instructional-Evaluation Objectives" so that the goals of the learning are clear and the intervention can be focused effectively.	Starting with metrics gives us a clearer idea of what we are really aiming for, and drives appropriate design.		Bad OK Good
9. Remember to include retrieval-practice opportunities in the learning specifically to improve learning and minimizing forgetting.	Retrieval practice is critical, whether we assess or not.		Bad OK Good
10. Consider legal requirements. Tests must validly & reliably predict job performance not create unfair disadvantages. To prove your test is valid, you must have documentation that your assessment is fair and valid (based on job analysis).	You don't really want your company to be sued do you? Plan for legality. You can't validate post hoc.		Bad OK Good