TAEASS502 Answers: Mapping Assessment Tools

What is competency mapping?

Competency means more than just being able to do a task. It is meeting a set of criteria laid out by the unit including:

- ALL performance criteria
- ALL foundational skills
- ALL performance evidence
- ALL knowledge evidence
- Assessment conditions

Mapping is simply matching the criteria of the unit to all the stuff in your assessments.

You may have several questions and a number of assessment tasks to map.

To ensure a good paper trail, it's important to map each of the questions and/or checklist items in the assessment tasks in a separate column. *Why*? An assessment tool developer (you) must be able to show in a snapshot precisely how and where each part of the unit is addressed in all your tasks and activities. Not just to colleagues, managers and other assessors, but in many cases to auditors from the regulator (and in rare cases, a court of law).

Why map?

Didn't I already do this when I was planning? Yes, but in a vague, broad-brushed, initial planning kind of way.

One of the big pitfalls when developing anything is you build a certain emotional attachment to the product you create, which leads to bias. Mapping the final assessment tool enables you to check your product through a different lense than the one you looked through when planning.

This bias creates problems when mapping too. We tend to overestimate the quality of our assessment question or checklist item.

Many of us have found during mapping that we just haven't quite addressed a criteria properly (or sometimes missed it altogether!)

Use this rule when mapping: "*If in doubt, leave it out!*"

If you don't have valid questions that sufficiently cover the ALL of the unit requirements, you expose your training organisation to non-compliance. This can lead to heartache for your learners who may need to redo the parts not covered by the assessment tool you designed.

Pack in your pride and be honest with yourself. Don't try to make the questions fit when they don't.

Did you know? Best practice suggests mapping learning content, not just assessment tools. *What fun!*

Now all the serious stuff is out of the way, let's get mapping.

Step 1: Gather resources required

- Competency mapping template
- Unit of competency + assessment requirements
- Assessment tasks + instruments
- 1 big jug of black coffee

Step 2: Populate the left-hand side of the competency map using the unit criteria

For the new standards for training packages we have:

- performance criteria
- foundational skills
- performance evidence
- knowledge evidence
- assessment conditions.

If you have an old training package standard unit (usually pre-2015) then list the:

- performance evidence
- required/essential skills
- required/essential knowledge
- critical aspects and assessment
- context of and specific resources for assessment

Step 3: Populate assessment tasks

Put the first task in the first column, second task in the second column, and so on, until all your assessment tasks are listed.

Step 4: Map the first assessment task

Map the first assessment task, one at a time starting with the first assessment task. Match up the assessment questions/checklist items to the criteria of the unit, working down the page criteria by criteria, recording your results down the first column.

Now do the same for the second assessment task, recording the mapping down the second column.

Continue as such until you have mapped all of the assessment tasks.

Sometimes instead of an actual number, we may write "ALL".

The reason for this is (for example) if the criteria of the unit states, "use appropriate verbal and non-verbal skills to seek and convey information" and the assessment task is a role play, then the assessment method by its very nature is assessing the criteria we are trying to assess.

PRO TIP

Avoid using "X" instead of the question/checkpoint number. This provides a poor audit trail and renders the mapping useless for any future use.

Step 5: Get honest.

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are all criteria met? Are any rows not marked with a question or checkpoint from an assessment task? How can I cover them?
2. Were there any questions or checkpoint that met only one criteria? Could it possibly be a low-quality question? Is there room to integrate this with another question or task?
3. Are there any questions or checkpoints that did not make it on the competency map? Are these questions irrelevant and may be safely discarded?

Why didn't we do this first?

Good question.

It is important not to inhibit the creative process. Developing assessment tools is about prototyping. It's not going to be perfect the first time and nobody expects that of you. It's important to create freely with the learner and the job role in mind.

It is far easier to map well designed draft assessment tools back to the unit.

If we are not designing for our clients, who are we designing for?

Starting the process with mapping will result in a mechanical, *over-assessed* approach to recognising competency in your candidates, rather than a streamlined, effective, thoughtful, and human-centred assessment that reflects the real-world job requirements.

Mapping last puts your learner's needs first.

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Coffs Harbour Education Campus (IC Block)

Doug Knight Drive
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

(02) 5616 0111

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