

# Theoretical assessment design: Best practices in pre-registration nursing education.

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## Abstract

Since the nineteenth century, assessment has been used in higher education. Assessment traditions, on the other hand, had to be adapted through change and innovation in a continually evolving higher education system. In an effort to address transformation in nursing education, nurse educators are tasked to ensure that current assessment practices remain relevant without compromising the quality. This study aimed to establish best practices for theoretical assessment design in pre-registration nursing education. Following a robust literature search process following the five steps of Arksey and O'Malley's framework, a consensus to shortlist twelve studies was reached. Three independent reviewers were involved in this process to ensure rigor. The findings revealed that various factors have a significant impact on theoretical assessment design in pre-registration nursing education. These factors include: (1) the use of taxonomy framework to align assessments, (2) bridging the theory-practice gap, (3) nurse educators' workload. These findings suggest that the quality and relevance of theoretical assessments design in pre-registration nursing education could benefit immensely when nurse educators place emphasis on constructive alignment with reference to the scaffolding of the assessment or for learning based on taxonomy frameworks and clinical practice. Nurse educators should endeavour to effectively apply and appropriately align theoretical assessments with the principles of taxonomy frameworks such as that of Benjamin Bloom. When the framework is implemented correctly, nurse educators will be able to design assessments that are well-balanced, assessing appropriate cognitive skills without creating the impression of a tough or easy assessment. To reduce the theory-practice gap, emphasis should be placed on types of questions used when designing assessments considering that assessment practices must be aligned with the learning and teaching strategies. The workload is a management issue that calls for norms and standards for workload distribution considering the time needed for the design of meaningful assessments.

**Keywords:** assessment design, assessment practices, Bloom's taxonomy, nurse educator, theoretical assessment

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