

Box 7.

Analytical versus global assessment

In an *analytical assessment*, various aspects of a competency are assessed separately. A formula is used to combine the partial assessments into one final score.

Because the criteria are explicitly defined and each partial competence is explicitly assessed, the result is very transparent and usually more reliable and more informative for the learner. Criteria are usually defined in terms of: “The candidate is able to...”.

Problems that may occur are:

- Learners may adapt their learning activities to ‘ticking’ specified criteria. This may result in unnatural activities in the workplace where competencies are acquired.
- Analytical assessment is very labour intensive. It may be experienced as bureaucratic.
- It can be difficult for assessors to give a truly distinct assessment of each individual criterion (‘halo effect’).
- Assessors have limited freedom to take account of specific competencies or extremely good (or poor) performance: if it is not in the criteria, it is not assessed. The assessor may feel curtailed in his/her freedom by the criteria.

In a global assessment, the assessors study the entire portfolio and give an assessment based on their overall impression. A global assessment is far less labour intensive than an analytical assessment. It also enables assessors to take account of learners’ special qualities.

Disadvantages are:

- It is less clear to learners on which criteria the assessment is based. The assessment may also be less reliable. As a result the assessment will be less acceptable to learners.
- Some assessors will feel less certain about their judgement. As a result they will study the material over and over again, which will take even more time than an analytical assessment.
- This type of assessment is relatively vulnerable to assessor preferences and sequence effects (the contrast with the previous candidate may influence the assessment).