

Improving authenticity in assessment

Capturing real service skills in an assessment for existing workshop staff



Focus

Improving authenticity in assessment: *Protecting the integrity of the outcomes by capturing practical skills.*

Background

Danielle is a trainer and assessor working across several automotive workshops. She was responsible for assessing existing workers on routine servicing, inspection processes and job documentation as part of skills verification and ongoing workforce capability.

Some of the workers had been in the industry for years and were confident in day-to-day workshop tasks. However, Danielle found that confidence and experience did not always translate into clear, authentic evidence of assessment. Some workers spoke well about procedures in discussions, but were less consistent when completing the same tasks under normal workshop conditions. A few took shortcuts, omitted parts of the process, or completed documentation poorly when the workshop was busy.

Danielle knew that if the assessment relied too heavily on verbal responses or written knowledge checks, it would not fully safeguard the integrity of the result.

The challenge

The assessment process was not gathering enough authentic evidence of practical skill.

It showed what some workers knew in theory, but not always what they could do to meet workplace standards in a live workshop.

This mattered because automotive work depends on safe processes, accurate inspections, proper tool use, and clear documentation. Danielle needed to ensure the assessment decisions reflected real workplace performance, not just confidence, experience, or the ability to talk through the task.

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Solutions

Danielle reworked the assessment to focus on live workshop tasks. She assessed workers while they completed a genuine service job from start to finish, including preparing the work area, selecting tools and equipment, carrying out checks in the correct order, identifying service issues and completing the job card accurately. This allowed her to capture the full performance, rather than isolated parts of the task.

She used a detailed practical assessment guide built around observable actions. The guide covered preparation, safety, sequence, technique, inspection accuracy, recording and communication. This kept the assessment consistent across different workers and workshop settings.

Danielle also strengthened the authenticity of the evidence by asking workers to explain key decisions during the task. When a worker identified uneven tyre wear or low fluid levels, she asked them to explain what they had found, why it was important and what action should follow. This gave her evidence of both skill and judgement.

She treated workplace documentation as part of the assessment, not as an add-on. She checked whether the worker recorded the findings clearly, accurately, and at the right time. This aligned with real workshop requirements and showed whether the worker could complete the task to the expected standard.

To make the evidence more reliable, Danielle was careful about prompting. She allowed standard workplace clarification, but if a worker needed repeated directions or corrections to complete the task, she recorded that as part of the evidence. This gave a more accurate picture of independence and competence.

She also gathered evidence from multiple jobs as needed, especially when the first observation did not fully demonstrate consistency. This helped her confirm that the worker could meet the required standard as part of normal work, not just on one occasion.

As a result, Danielle's assessments became stronger, clearer and more defensible. Workshop managers had greater confidence in the outcomes because the evidence reflected actual job performance rather than assumptions. Workers also had a clearer understanding of what competent performance looked like in practice.

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Next steps

Other trainers can apply this learning by:

- assessing workers during real workshop tasks whenever possible
- capturing the full task from preparation through to documentation, not just one isolated step
- using practical assessment tools based on observable actions and workplace standards
- asking workers to explain key decisions while they work, so skill and understanding are assessed together
- assessing the quality and timing of workplace documentation as part of the task
- limiting prompts and recording the level of support needed during the assessment
- gathering evidence across more than one job when consistency is part of the required standard
- checking that assessment decisions reflect actual performance in the workshop, not just years of experience or confidence in discussion
- reviewing assessment methods regularly to ensure they capture safe practice, accuracy and independence in real conditions.

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