

There seems to be an increasing trend towards assessing students through exams rather than through continual assessment.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of exams as a form of assessment?

In recent years, the approach of using exams to assess students has risen in popularity over the alternative of continual assessment. This essay will highlight both the benefits and drawbacks that result from such an approach.

To begin with the positives, a crucial advantage that examinations have as a form of assessment is that they leave little room for cheating. This is because exams are usually undertaken in the presence of an invigilator, whose job it is to detect any candidate breaking the rules. In contrast, continual assessment increases the risk of plagiarism since assignments are often completed with the help of the internet. Besides reducing cheating, exams are also more time-efficient. As they tend to only appear once or twice per year, they free up more time for students to revise and prepare.

Nevertheless, assessing students via examinations does present some problems. For instance, some students are extremely intelligent and creative, but when put under pressure their minds can go blank. Considering that exams are situations of intensely high pressure, it is no wonder that even the brightest of students sometimes perform poorly. Another significant disadvantage of this system is the narrow range of information which students are tested on. Unlike with continual assessment, the small window of time in tests limits how many questions can be asked, thus failing to test students' knowledge in full.

In conclusion, although formal examinations are beneficial in terms of cutting out cheating and improving efficiency, it is important to consider that they also harm some students' concentration and are arguably not as thorough as continual assessments.