



Definitions of Assessment Terminology

Alternative Assessment (Authentic Assessment, Performance Assessment)

An assessment that requires students to generate a response to a question rather than choose from a set of responses provided to them. Exhibitions, investigations, demonstrations, written or oral responses, journals, and portfolios are examples of Alternative Assessment. Ideally, Alternative Assessment requires students to actively accomplish complex and significant tasks, while bringing to bear prior knowledge, recent learning, and relevant skills to solve realistic or authentic problems. Alternative Assessments are usually one key element of an assessment system.

Analytic Scoring

Evaluating student work across multiple dimensions of performance rather than from an overall impression (holistic scoring). In analytic scoring, individual scores for each dimension are scored and reported. For example, analytic scoring of a history essay might include scores of the following dimensions: use of prior knowledge, application of principles, use of original source material to support a point of view, and composition. An overall impression of quality may be included in analytic scoring.

Assessment

The systematic process of determining educational objectives through gathering, using, and analyzing information about student learning outcomes to make decisions about programs, individual student progress, or accountability.

Assessment Method

Technique used to collect data associated with assessment. Methods may include such techniques as: course project, graduate survey, portfolio, external licensing exams, etc.

Benchmark

Expected levels/skills for an educational outcome. A benchmark must be quantifiable, typically stated as a percentage or number.

Capstone Courses

Culminating experiences in which students synthesize subject-matter knowledge they have acquired, integrate cross-disciplinary knowledge, and connect theory and application in preparation for entry into a career.

CAT's

Classroom Assessment Techniques are employed to give instructors information on the prior knowledge and skills of a class and on the class' understanding of or reaction to a particular session or reading. The most famous of these is the "minute paper," in which a teacher concludes or punctuates a class by asking students to write down the most important thing they learned that day, the most problematic aspect of a presentation or a brief response to any other topic the teacher chooses. Key features of classroom assessment include: it is universal (every student responds), anonymous and ungraded (so no student fears a penalty), and (like all efficient feedback) it is prompt, permitting the instructor to digest the results and use them immediately or in the next class. Classroom assessment techniques can be used for all sorts of purposes, including, seeking student background knowledge, assessing critical thinking or synthetic skills, gauging student attitudes, reactions, and self-awareness. Some useful CAT's include:

- Questionnaires that elicit students' background knowledge of a topic
- Empty outlines, categorizing grids, and "pro and con" grids
- What, How, and Why Outlines to sort out the content, form and function of story or article
- Analytic Memos: short analysis of a reading
- One-sentence (or longer) summaries of a reading
- Invented Dialogues: students select or invent quotations from sources read in class on a particular issue, e.g. Socrates and Aristotle on citizenship
- What's the Principle? Students read a few problems and state which principle or guiding term studied in the course applies to each

Classroom Assessment Techniques

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Competency

A group of characteristics, native or acquired, which indicate an individual's ability to acquire skills in a given area.

Competency-Based Assessment (Criterion-Referenced Assessment)

Measures an individual's performance against a predetermined standard of acceptable performance. Progress is based on actual performance rather than on how well learners perform in comparison to others; usually still given under classroom conditions. CASAS and BEST are examples of competency-based assessments.

Countable Outcomes (ACLS)

Results that can be quantified; all measures of student outcomes except learning gains, including executive function skills, and affective-related measures. Learning gains are gains in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and numeracy. Executive function skills include problem-solving, critical thinking, and metacognition. Affective-related measures include self-esteem, self confidence, and interpersonal communication.

Examples of Countable Outcomes include: number of people who get jobs, number of people who register to vote, number of people who achieve a GED.

Course Embedded Assessment Techniques

A program assessment method based on an assignment used in a specific course.

Examples include:

- **Primary Trait Analysis:** instructor identifies ideal student achievement on an assignment, unit, course or curriculum, then measures student achievement against it using a single, holistic grade.
- **Directed Paraphrasing:** students summarize in well-chosen (own) words a key idea presented during the class period or the one just past.
- **Muddiest Point:** students write one or two ideas that were least clear to them from the current or preceding class period.
- **Minute Paper:** students identify the most significant (useful, meaningful, disturbing, etc.) things they learned during a particular session.
- **Characteristic Features:** students summarize in matrix form those traits that help define a topic and differentiate it from others; useful for determining whether students separate items or ideas that are easily confused.
- **Transfer and Apply:** students write down concepts learned from the class in one column; in another column provide an application of each concept.
- **RSQC2:** in two minutes, students recall and list in rank order the most important ideas from a previous day's class; in two more minutes, they summarize those points in a single sentence, then write one major question they want answered, then identify a thread or theme to connect this material to the course's major goal.

Curriculum-Embedded or Learning-Embedded Assessment

Assessment that occurs simultaneously with learning, such as projects, portfolios and exhibitions. Occurs in the classroom setting, and, if properly designed, students should not be able to tell whether they are being taught or assessed. Tasks or tests are developed from the curriculum or instructional materials.

Direct Assessment

Direct measures of student learning require student to display their knowledge and skills as they respond to the instrument itself. Objective tests, essays, presentations, and classroom assignments all meet this criterion.

Direct Assessment Tools

Direct assessment tools and strategies include: portfolios, licensure exams, internships, and other measures of student learning.

E-Portfolios

E-Portfolio provides students with the ability to electronically store collections of their intellectual work, thus enabling them to document their intellectual growth and development from entry to graduation and beyond. The goal of the e-Portfolio project is

to deepen learning and empower students by providing them visible evidence of their learning and illuminating a pathway toward educational and career goals.

Formative Assessment

Assessment that provides feedback to the teacher for the purpose of improving instruction. An assessment which is used for improvement (individual or program level) rather than for making final decisions or for accountability.

General Education Outcomes (Specific to Navajo Technical College)

Goals

Holistic Scoring

Evaluating student work in which the score is based on an overall impression of student performance rather than multiple dimensions of performance (analytic scoring).

Indirect Assessment

Indirect assessment asks students to reflect on their learning rather than to demonstrate it. Techniques include external reviewers, student surveys, exit interviews, alumni surveys, employer surveys, and curriculum and syllabus analysis.

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Learning Outcome (Educational Outcome)

Flows directly from the program's Statement of Purpose. Reflects specific knowledge, skills and abilities a student will achieve when they complete the program. Learning outcomes describe the learning mastered in behavioral terms at specific levels. In other words, what the learner will be able to do.

Outcomes

Portfolios

A systematic and organized collection of a student's work that exhibits to others the direct evidence of a student's efforts, achievements, and progress over a period of time. Examples include:

- Showcase: Student only puts best example or best product in for each objective.
- Cumulative: Student places all work relevant to each objective into the portfolio.
- Process: Student places pre/post-samples of work for each objective into the portfolio.

Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio is a collection of work, usually drawn from students' classroom work. A portfolio becomes a Portfolio Assessment when (1) the assessment purpose is defined; (2) criteria or methods are made clear for determining what is put into the portfolio, by whom, and when; and (3) criteria for assessing either the collection or individual pieces of work are identified and used to make judgments about performance. Portfolios can be designed to assess student progress, effort, and/or achievement, and encourage students to reflect on their learning.

Program Assessment

Evaluation of determined student learning outcomes that informs changes in pedagogy and curriculum to increase student success.

Rating Scales

Values given to student performance. Subjective assessments are made on predetermined criteria for documenting where learners fall on a continuum of proficiency. Rating scales include numerical scales or descriptive scales.

Reliability

The measure of consistency for an assessment instrument. The instrument should yield similar results over time with similar populations in similar circumstances.

Rubric

A rubric is a scoring and instruction tool used to assess student performance using a task-specific range or set of criteria. To measure student performance against this predetermined set of criteria, a rubric contains the essential criteria for the task and levels of performance (i.e., from poor to excellent) for each criterion.

Summative Assessment

A culminating assessment, which gives information on students' mastery of content, knowledge, or skills. The gathering of information at the conclusion of a course, program, or undergraduate career to improve learning or to meet accountability demands.

Validity

The extent to which an assessment measures what it is supposed to measure and the extent to which inferences and actions made on the basis of test scores are appropriate and accurate.