

Assessment

In

ODL

(Handouts)

Handout 1 MODES OF ASSESSMENT

Matching Exercise

1. This kind of assessment is administered during instruction to find out which learning outcomes learners are handling or which they need help with; done in order to shape, and improve performance and behaviour.
2. This kind of assessment is administered at the end of a specified period of time: -course, unit, year. This is to identify whether learners have achieved the objectives of the course. Emphasis can be placed on assigning grades.
3. This assessment is given to compare learners' score with the average score of the other students in the class. The teacher can include a large number of easy items.
4. This assessment is given to compare learner performance against a standard or a set of performance tasks. A learner's outcome is dependent on what he/she can do – what objectives each learner has mastered. The facilitator can use some very easy and some very difficult items.
5. This assessment is based on authentic tasks that require students to show what they can do. Learners have to create responses to any given problems and be able to defend their positions. At times learners must demonstrate their ability in real life contexts while working on projects, or designing something. This encourages higher analytic and critical thinking.

For each of the descriptions above:

Match the description with the mode of assessment as indicated below.

- A. Criterion-referenced Assessment
- B. Formative Assessment
- C. Norm-referenced Assessment
- D. Performance-based assessment
- E. Summative or Final Assessment

Handout 2 TYPES OF ASSESSMENT IN ODL

Types of Online Assessment

A variety of methods may be used online to assess learners in the following areas (Morgan and O'Reilly 1999):

- Critical thinking (essays, reports, reflective journals)
- Problem solving (multimedia or text-based scenarios, simulations using CD-ROM, videoconferencing)
- Demonstrating techniques (videoconferencing, verification by workplace mentor, site monitor)
- Self-management (journal, autobiography, portfolio, learning contract)
- Information access/management (database development, bibliography, problem solving)
- Demonstrating knowledge (written exam with local proctors, quick feedback through multiple choice, true/false matching, short answer tests)
- Designing, creating (portfolios, projects using video or the Web)
- Communicating (debate, role play, PowerPoint presentation, report journal, essay)
- Teamwork and collaboration (e-mail, listserv, or conferencing discussions/debates)

Advantages, disadvantages, and examples of several types are presented in the following chart.

	Advantages	Disadvantages	Examples
Case Studies (Dirks 1998, Niederhauser et al. 1999)	Current, authentic, require comprehensive application of learning	Subjective, time consuming for learners to complete and instructors to grade	Four interactive case studies on disease prevention and health promotion (Niederhauser et al. 1999) were included in a nurse practitioner web-based course using two types of CGIs—Net Cloak and Netforms. The site included links to faculty, a syllabus, bibliography, guidelines for task completion, required readings, grading criteria, and the evaluation. The tasks included finding websites relevant to cases, answering questions about cases online, and participating in online discussions over 2 weeks. Learners were evaluated on their use of the Internet for learning as well as case discussions, answers, and websites found. The cases thus developed both content knowledge and information literacy skills.
Discussions (Nelson 1998; Tarouco, de Vit, Hack, and Geller 2000)	Require thoughtful conceptualization and presentation of ideas; encourage some who are intimidated by face-to-face discussion; instructor monitoring of discussions catches problems early	Generate huge amounts of text to be evaluated, may require new types of assessment criteria, present time and access constraints	Tarouco et al. (2000) describe a learning environment developed to support group work and learner assessment through the Internet using a set of computer-mediated distance learning tools: a consensus tool (based on Delphi technique) collects and tabulates responses and level of contributions to discussions; a tracking tool registers pages accessed, date/time; a voting tool provides fast feedback from learners to instructor; and a self-evaluation tool enables learners to chart their own progress.
Microworlds/Simulations (Hopper 1998; Schacter et al. 1999)	Require learners to construct knowledge and use metacognitive strategies; allow performance-based assessment	Can involve complex programming and specific hardware and software	Middle school students (Schacter et al. 1999) move from novice to expert knowledge of environmental science by assembling a concept map, an authentic task involving electronic information-seeking skills (exploration, creation, relevance, extraction, synthesis, organizing, representation). Four computer tools were used: (1) Java Mapper (concept mapping software); (2) a simulated web environment (database of 200+ selected websites); (3) a bookmarking Java applet; and (4) feedback provided in real time (comparison of learners' performance to expert performance). Students could also construct knowledge maps synchronously and collaboratively using Hyper Card® or Java knowledge management software.
Electronic Portfolios (Aschermann 1999; Milman 1999)	Accommodate multiple intelligences; present a cross-section of achievements and skills; capture performance data; require critical self-assessment	Can emphasize bells/whistles; require time to compile and assess; creators and assessors need technical skills; storage space and transportability may be barriers	Electronic portfolios are being used increasingly in preservice teacher education. Aschermann (1999) describes how preservice teachers originally created them on CD-ROM, but they were difficult to update and production hardware/software was costly. They switched to Netscape Composer, a free program requiring little technical knowledge. Use of the Web improved portfolio quality and allowed assessment of technology skills as well.
Self-Assessments (Eigelow 1999; Taylor 1998)	Teach a lifelong skill; important in distance learning because of potential remoteness, isolation, few opportunities for interaction and monitoring; online instruments are easily scored and analyzed, providing instant feedback; learners can retry and reevaluate	Must account for diverse backgrounds and approaches to study; self-assessment that provides only model answers or solutions is not useful	Self Test < http://www.usq.edu.au/users/taylorja/Selftest.htm > is an Australian instrument designed so that learners can write out their solutions to math problems in detail, have a means of comparing their solution with a model solution, have a number of alternative model solutions available to them if appropriate, be credited when they get only part of a solution correct, and be given a summary at the end of each session detailing which topics they still have to master.

Handout 3 SELF-ASSESSMENT AND TUTOR-MARKED ASSESSMENT

Introduction

As noted already, assignments play a critical role in ODL, they are one way in which both the learner and the tutor can assess whether learning is taking place.

Self-assessment:

In terms of importance, self assessment in face-to-face teaching ranks higher than that of ODL learning. In a typical classroom setting learners tend to have many opportunities to measure their progress than in an ODL environment. In general ODL learners have limited means to judge their own progress.

Self-assessment refers to the ‘involvement of learners in making judgment about their own learning, particularly about their achievement and the outcomes of their learning’ (Boud and Falchikov, 1989, 529 in Crump, 2005).

The term self-assessment can be used interchangeably with self-marking, self-ratings or self-evaluations. The basic understanding of this practice is that students engage in a process to review, rate or mark their performance or evaluate their own learning. In effect, there has been increasing interest in ways to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning. The literature shows that they should be able to work independently and also assess their own performance (Boud and Falchikov, 1989). Since students need to be involved actively in evaluating and providing examples of their own learning, Adams and Hamm (1992, 105) believe they should be given the opportunity, among other things, to identify their thoughts and reflect on what they understand; this allows them to ‘create, evaluate and act upon matters that they and others value’.

See (Crump, 2005, p.34)

Purpose of self-assessment:

1. To provide learners with summative feedback on their learning of a specific section
2. To help learners identify any errors, misunderstandings or misconceptions that they may be experiencing.
3. To provide learners with remedial strategies to deal with the errors

Format of self-assessment tests:

A good self assessment test:

- Should take a minimum amount of time
- Tests as much of the content as possible for that section
- Be of reasonable length
- Be diagnostic in nature
- Provide feedback on correct and incorrect answers

Tutor-marked assessment:

Tutor-marked assignments represent the assessment tasks which the tutor is responsible for responding to and therefore give detailed feedback to the learners. It is very important that these kinds of tasks are well planned so that they can achieve the objective they are designed to achieve. For example, what are the purposes of the assignments, how are the marking guides prepared, how far can we say model answers are enough or not.

Purposes of tutor-marked assignment

- Provide detailed and personalised feedback: this is one way in which we provide learner support to that student who is at a distance. While in the f2f situation a learner will see tutor and be able to have an exchange with her/him and also even read the body language, the distance learner will only get the feedback on the assignment. Tutor has to provide in detail and in a personalised manner all feedback on the learners work. Learner should not be left in any doubt of what the standard expectation was. This feedback is also the critical form of dialogue between the learner and the tutor.
- Identify the most important parts: usually the assignments that a tutor asks and require to mark will be of information regarded as critical to the course or learning process a learner is engaged in. Learners therefore will know that information being given in the form of assignments is important.
- Supplement course work: yes most of the time the marked assignment is also going to be part of the continuous assessment required for the overall assessment of the learner in the course. The importance of this work therefore, from both the part of tutor and the learner cannot be over emphasised.
- Assess how a course can be improved: students' comfort with programme material; appropriateness of assignments; clarity of course content; effectiveness of learner support strategies etc.

Guidelines for preparing questions

Before preparing the questions, students should be fully informed about the criteria, content, and methods of each assessment and when possible, examples should be provided. The following are the guidelines that may be followed when preparing tutor-marked questions

- Tasks given as assignment should be clear, to ensure that the distance learner understands exactly what is required of him/her
- Tasks should be from a broad area of coverage to ensure that each of the learners is able to respond to at least an area
- Ensure that tasks come from area that has been adequately covered
- Just like in the preparation of objectives, tasks should make use of active verbs to ensure that learners know what they are expected to do.

For each assessment you create, ask the following questions:

- Is it relevant to the unit's stated objectives?
- Is the purpose clear?
- Is the wording/structure clear?
- Are the tests manageable?

1.3 Feedback on Assessments

Students should be able to assess the adequacy of their responses to assessment exercises.

Students need:

- to know how the right answer was reached
- information on their own performance, particularly where they may have gone wrong
- a clear picture of what they should do next; in what order
- confidence in assessing their own performance and thus becoming more self-directed in their learning

Handout 4: REFERENCES

References:

- Angelo, T. & Cross, P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publishers.
- Commonwealth of Learning. (2005). *Creating learning materials for Open and distance learning. A handbook for authors and instructional designers*.
- Crump, C. (2005). *Designing meaningful and fair tests and assignments: A handbook for teachers*. Antigua & Barbuda: Printing and Publishing Co..
- Willis, B. (1993). *Distance education: A practical guide*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications.
- Gronlund, N. (1998). *Assessment of student achievement*. (6th Ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Web Resources:

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assessment>

- http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/ae0/al_what.html
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-a>
- <http://apu.gcal.ac.uk/ciced/Ch21.html>
- <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/biology/samp.html?biology>
- http://www.sddu.leeds.ac.uk/online_resources/assessment/administration/mark ing.htm
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