

Importance of Assessment in Online Instruction

With the growth and expansion of online teaching and the high levels of demand from students for online courses, assessment becomes a very important topic to include with the discussion of online teaching.

According to Martell and Calderon (2005), assessment is an ongoing process that involves planning, discussion, consensus building, reflection, measuring, analyzing, and improving based on the data and artifacts gathered about a learning objective.

Without a teachers physical presence in an online course, new instructional practices built on unique relationships between students and instructors become necessary. Along side this transition, the assessment delivery methods also need to be updated as the mechanism of learning paradigms are changed (Liang, 2004).

Assessment encompasses a wide range of components including testing, project ratings, discussions and, observations of student assignment completion (Orlich, Harder, Callahan & Gibson, 2004).

In today's ever changing university dynamics, the use of e-learning tools and technologies can provide instructors an efficient and effective means of assessing. These assessments can be used by instructors to both evaluate their own teaching as well as levels of learning taking place by their students. These new technologies and tools have been created to support traditional, face-to-face teaching and provide an alternative to assessment protocols (Bennett, 2002).

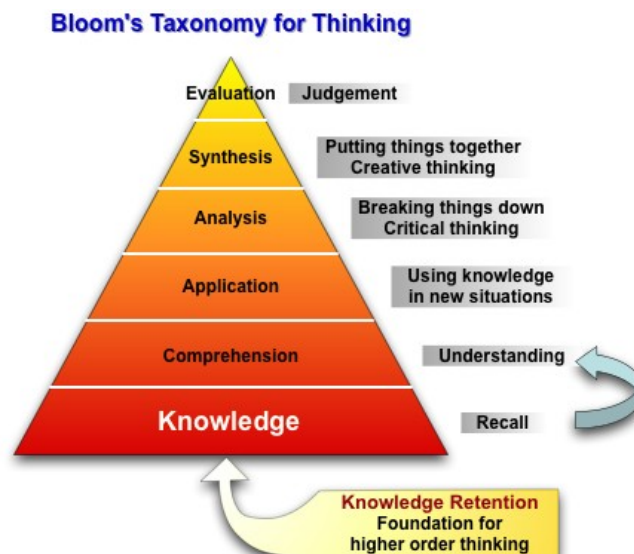
Many studies have been conducted to determine the most effective assessment tools and techniques. The one consistent finding across these studies has been that collaborative learning is the most successful strategy in assessing how well students are doing. Such assessments should begin with a very specific understanding of desired learning (Haken, 2006).

Haken (2006) explained "that it is important to measure knowledge; however, measuring knowledge is not enough. Hence, the current charge in education is to transform learning and assessment from the world of memorized facts to a broad, well-rounded model that reflects the learner centered outcomes of an academic program" (Wright, 2004).

As a result, an academic program should work on building as well as assessing students' critical-thinking skills (Haken, 2006).

The Blooms Taxonomy for thinking represents how different levels of understanding are achieved if correct assessment techniques are used.

— S. Dean Aslinia
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Martell, K., & Calderon, T. (2005). Assessment of student learning in business schools: What it is, where we are, and where we need to go next. In K. Martell & T. Calderon, *Assessment of student learning in business schools: Best practices each step of the way* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1-22). Tallahassee, Florida: Association for Institutional Research.

Formative Surveys (Online Courses)

Students in online courses (01W, 02W...) are required to complete a formative survey approximately two weeks after the beginning of the term. These surveys serve to inform the instructors as to the experience of students regarding the start-up of the course(s). Survey administration dates and delivery of the survey results to faculty and department heads is provided in table below:

Term	Dates Surveys are Administered to Students	Results to Faculty/ Department Heads
Summer I 2008	June 12 — June 16	June 18— August 18
Summer II 2008	July 17— July 21	July 23 — August 18

Summative Surveys (Online Courses)

Students in online courses (01W, 02W...) are also required to complete a summative survey approximately two weeks prior to the close of the term. These surveys inform the faculty assigned to the course and the department head of how the students evaluated the course. Survey administration dates and delivery of the survey results to faculty and department heads is provided in table below:

Term	Dates Surveys are Administered to Students	Results to Faculty/ Department Heads
May Mini 2008	May 23 — May 26	June 4 — August 16
Summer I 2008	June 25 — June 30	July 11 — August 18
Summer II 2008	July 25 — July 29	August 18 — November 18

Announcements

Summer Term Preparations

Summer I, 2008 courses are scheduled to be populated with students beginning Wednesday, May 21st.

Summer II, 2008 courses are currently being copied. In order to handle this course copying process with the greatest efficiency and accuracy, we request your assistance. If you have not requested that your Summer II 2008 course(s) be copied as of this date, **please complete the online course copy request form located at www.tamu-commerce.edu/itde/copyrequest.asp.**

(You may verify whether or not your course has already been copied by going to the myCourses tab when logged in to eCollege.)

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