

SEADAE Arts Assessment Survey 2015

Glossary of Assessment Terms

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Please note: *This glossary has been derived from various sources, as cited, and edited for purposes of this survey.*

Assessment: An ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning that involves making expectations explicit and known; setting appropriate criteria and standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance (Angelo, 1995)¹

Accountability: having responsibility for educational outcomes

Assessment for Accountability: Taking measure of some unit, such as a department, program or institution, to satisfy a group of external stakeholders; results are often compared across similar units, such as similar programs, and are always summative⁵

Assessment for Improvement: Activities that are designed to feed the results directly and, ideally, immediately back into revising the course, program, or institution with the goal of improving student learning. Both formative and summative assessment data can be used to guide improvements.⁵

Assessment for Learning (also known as formative assessment): Gathering information or data about student learning to guide improvements in teaching and learning during a course or program; are usually low-stakes or no-stakes and do not generally contribute substantially to the final evaluation or grade of the student and may not even be assessed at the individual student level. **Example:** Posing a question in class and asking for a show of hands in support of various response options is a class-level formative assessment. Observing how many students responded correctly or incorrectly would then be used to guide further teaching.⁵

Assessment of Learning (also known as summative assessment): Gathering information at the conclusion of a chapter, unit, course, or time period to improve learning or to meet accountability demands. When used for improvement, summative assessment impacts the next cohort of students. **Examples:** examining student final exams in a course to see if certain specific areas of the curriculum were understood less well than others; analyzing senior projects for students' ability to integrate across disciplines.⁵

Authentic Assessment: Assessments that emulate the performance that would be required of the student in real-life situations.²

Classroom Assessment: Formative or summative assessments created by the teacher for use within that classroom for the purpose of measuring student learning and making instructional decisions

Common Assessment: Collaboratively developed by groups of educators who agree on a specific format and purpose for the assessment and who administer it in consistent ways, e.g., by giving students the same instructions or by using the same scoring guides to interpret results. The general goal of a

common assessment, which may be formative or summative, is to ensure that all teachers in a department or content area, for example, are able to evaluate student performance in a more consistent, reliable, and effective manner. Common assessments are used to encourage greater consistency in teaching from course to course, allowing educators to compare performance results across multiple courses and learning experiences in a manner not possible when educators teach different material and develop their own assessments individually.³ (see also *Standardized Assessment*)

Competency-based Assessment: Used to indicate the degree to which a student has mastered a prescribed set of skills, abilities, and/or knowledge needed to perform a specific task and used for purposes of retention, promotion, or graduation⁴

Constructed-response Assessment: Calls for the student to generate the entire response to a question, rather than choosing an answer from a list (e.g., paper-and-pencil responses on essay or short answer tests or performances which may be drawn, danced, acted out, performed musically, or provided in any other way to exhibit particular skills or knowledge); also referred to as open-response and open-ended assessments²

Criterion-referenced Assessment: Designed to measure student performance against a set of clearly defined criteria. Such assessments are used to identify student strengths and weaknesses with regard to specified knowledge and skills. Synonyms include standards-based or standards-referenced and objective-, content-, domain-, or universe-referenced.²

Embedded Assessment: A means of gathering information about student learning that is integrated into the teaching-learning process. Results can be used to assess individual student performance or they can be aggregated to provide information about the course. It can be formative or summative, quantitative or qualitative. Example: As part of a course, expecting each senior to complete a research paper that is graded for content and style, but is also assessed for ability to locate and evaluate information for purposes of measuring information literacy.⁵

Formative Assessment: A process used by teachers and students during instruction to provide immediate feedback for adjustments to ongoing teaching and learning; short-interval and class-level assessments that have immediate information for teachers and students to inform the instructional process and determine what comes next in the learning process² (see also *Assessment for Learning*)

Local Assessment: Test instruments and practices that are developed by a school or district's faculty based on their teaching approaches, students, and learning goals (see also *Classroom Assessment* and *Common Assessment*).⁵

Performance Assessment: Typically requires students to complete a complex task, such as a writing assignment, science experiment, speech, presentation, performance, or long-term project. Educators often use collaboratively developed common assessments, scoring guides, rubrics, and other methods to evaluate whether the work produced by students shows that they have learned what they were expected to learn.³

Portfolio: a purposeful collection of student work across time which exhibits a student's efforts, progress, and/or level of proficiency. Examples: *showcase* (best work), *instructional, assessment* (used to evaluate the student), *process* or *project* (shows all phases in the development of a product or performance).²

Program Assessment: Uses the department or program as the level of analysis; can be quantitative or qualitative, formative or summative, standards-based or value-added, and used for improvement or for accountability. Ideally, program goals and objectives would serve as a basis for the assessment.⁵

Rubric: A scoring tool that explicitly represents the performance expectations for an assignment or piece of work; divides the assigned work into component parts and provides clear descriptions of the characteristics of the work associated with each component, at varying levels of mastery⁵

Selected-response Item: A test item for which students must select the correct or best answer from a list of options (e.g., multiple-choice) or indicate the truth or falsity of a statement.²

Standards: Refers to an established level of accomplishments that all students are expected to meet or exceed. Performance or learning standards may be met through multiple pathways and demonstrated in various ways.⁵

Standardized Assessment: Designed, administered, and scored in a standard, or consistent, manner; often use a multiple-choice format, though some include open-ended, short-answer questions; can be administered to large student populations of the same age or grade level in a state, region, or country, and results can be compared across individuals and groups of students³ (see also *Common Assessment*)

Summative Assessment: The effort to summarize student learning at a particular point in time, such as the end of a chapter, unit, grading period, semester, year, or end of course; most often leads to evaluation of learning² (see also *Assessment of Learning*)

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