NASPA WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2020

Assessing Online Learning: Defining, Exploring, and Choosing Appropriate Assessment Methods

TOGETHER TOWARDS TOMORROW
NASPA WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE
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College classrooms have gone virtual!

How do we ensure that we are effectively measuring student learning in the online environment?

Do we even *need* to change our assessment methods for online learning?

Assessment Strategies for Online Learning

(Conrad & Openo, 2018)

Learning Outcomes

1. Define online learning assessment and describe how it differs from in-person learning assessment

2. Identify and describe at least five different online learning assessment methods

3. Describe how online assessments will be used in your own online classroom

Who's in the Room?

On a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high), how much experience do you have teaching online?

On a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high), how would you rate your current knowledge of assessment practices?

What methods do you currently use to assess online learning?

What is Assessment?

Assessment "offers the opportunity to **measure**, in various fashions, the performance of both learners and teachers" (p. 17)

Systematic collection of information about student learning

Interactive process between students and teachers that informs teachers (and students) on student learning

What is Online Learning Assessment?

Online learning assessment: The measurement of student learning in an online context.

Online Learning:

- *Any combination* of learning provided virtually (including remote teaching, synchronous or asynchronous, hybrid coursework, etc.).
- Separation between instructor and learner in time and/or space

Online vs. In-Person Assessment: 5 Differences

#1 – Separation Between Teacher and Students

- The most common concern raised about assessment in distance learning = academic dishonesty

- "Rote" testing techniques → encourage and enable cheating

- Therefore, online assessment must be *authentic* (attached to real learning)

Online vs. In-Person Assessment: 5 Differences

#2 - The Role of Technology

- Online learning = labor/time intensive cognitively for students
- Participants may need additional time to consider what they are about to "say"
- Insecurity/ lack the skill to use LMS
- Give time/space to allow for authentic responses

Online vs. In-Person Assessment: 5 Differences

#3 – The *Positive* Role of Technology

Technology can enhance assessment practice!

- Improved learner engagement (polls, written reflections)
- Capture of wider range of skills (simulations, e-portfolios, interactive games)
- Efficient storage of learning samples & markings

Online vs. In-Person Assessment: 5 Differences

#4 – May Encourage Deeper Thinking

"Online learning may allow the learners think more deeply about the issues at hand than they may do in a face-to-face classroom, where a blurt or a nod can suffice for interaction and participation"

Online vs. In-Person Assessment: 5 Differences

#5 – Can Promote Learner Autonomy & Collaboration

- Instructor can incorporate opportunities for more *autonomy*
  - Choice of topic areas in which to engage
  - Choice in selecting resources to access
  - Choice in participating in thematic discussions

- Instructor can encourage *collaboration*
  - Group work, peer evaluations, blogs & journal interactions

Learning Outcomes

✓ Define online learning assessment and describe how it differs from in-person learning assessment

2. **Identify and describe at least five different online learning assessment methods**

3. Describe how online assessments will be used in your own online classroom

5 Online Learning Assessment Methods

Online Portfolios

Journals & Blogs

Online Projects

Group Work & Peer Eval

Social Media

5 Online Learning Assessment Methods

In small groups, participants will explore one of the assessment methods.

1. Take 3-5 minutes to read the handout on your assessment method
2. Discuss the following with your group (~10 minutes):
   – What the assessment method is; examples
   – Consider how the method could be incorporated into your online classroom
   – Identify with whom/when the method could be used (e.g., certain courses, mid-semester, certain student groups, etc.)
3. Report back to main group

Learning Outcomes

✓ Define online learning assessment and describe how it differs from in-person learning assessment

✓ Identify and describe at least five different online learning assessment methods

3. **Describe how online assessments will be used in your own online classroom**

Choosing Which Assessments to Use

- Look to course learning outcomes and/or assignment rubrics
- Choose/design assessments that match the outcomes/rubric
- Choose when and how to incorporate assessments
- Incorporate summative & formative assessments
  - **Summative**: Usually graded, judged, used outside of class
  - **Formative**: Usually ungraded, improvement-focused, in-class

Choosing Which Assessments to Use

"How can I use assessment to encourage students to adopt a surface approach to learning, and then do the opposite?" (Wittmann-Price & Godshall, 2009, p. 216).

"What is the absolute best evidence that learning has occurred for any particular learning outcome?" (Bull, 2015; p. 62).

Personal Assessment Plan

Take the next three minutes to write down your thoughts to the following questions:

- Which assessment methods would you like to use in your online course(s) this year?
- When might you implement these methods?
- How do these methods align with and support your course objectives?

THANK YOU!

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