

Assessment Glossary

Active Status: Learning objective is up to date and current in the assessment plan and is actively being assessed through the assessment process.

Assessment Measures: Activities that will measure a student's comprehension of an idea. (See **Means of Assessment**)

Bloom's Taxonomy: Benjamin Bloom originated this taxonomy for categorizing level of abstraction of questions that commonly occur in educational settings. The taxonomy provides a useful structure in which to categorize test questions, since professors will characteristically ask questions within particular levels, and if you can determine the levels of questions that will appear on your exams, you will be able to study using appropriate strategies. There are six levels arranged in order of increasing complexity (1=low, 6=high):

1. Knowledge: Recalling or remembering information without necessarily understanding it. Includes behaviors such as describing, listing, identifying, and labeling.
2. Comprehension: Understanding learned material and includes behaviors such as explaining, discussing, and interpreting.
3. Application: The ability to put ideas and concepts to work in solving problems. It includes behaviors such as demonstrating, showing, and making use of information.
4. Analysis: Breaking down information into its component parts to see interrelationships and ideas. Related behaviors include differentiating, comparing, and categorizing.
5. Synthesis: The ability to put parts together to form something original. It involves using creativity to compose or design something new.
6. Evaluation: Judging the value of evidence based on definite criteria. Behaviors related to evaluation include: concluding, criticizing, prioritizing, and recommending.

Continuous Improvement: Synonymous with institutional effectiveness. The process of measuring the achievement at an institution.

Criteria For Success: The standard by which persons will be judged on their ability to be successful in the eyes of stakeholders. This number is normally a percentage. For example: *In the Spring of 2013, 85% of Academic Advising staff will have advised more than 1,500 students.*

Curriculum Alignment: The degree to which a curriculum's scope and sequence matches a testing program's evaluation measures, thus ensuring that teachers will use successful completion of the test as a goal of classroom teaching.

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 Measures: These methods involve students' display of knowledge and skills (e.g. test results, written assignments, presentations, classroom assignments) resulting from learning experience in the class/program.

Feedback Loop: Process of setting goals and objectives, mapping those to learning opportunities, assessing the objectives, analyzing and discussing the results, then using the data for strategic planning in continuous improvement.

Formative Learning: Observations which allow one to determine the degree to which students know or are able to do a given learning task, and which identifies the part of the task that the student does not know or is unable to do. Outcomes suggest future steps for teaching and learning.

Assessment conducted during a performance/course/program with the purpose of providing feedback that can be used to modify, shape, and improve a performance/course/program. (See **Summative Assessment**)

Indirect Measures: Assessment methods that involve perceptions of learning rather than actual demonstrations of outcome achievement (e.g. alumni surveys, employer surveys, exit interviews).

Institutional Effectiveness: The measure of what an institution actually achieves.

Learning Objectives: Synonymous with outcomes. Statements that describe measurable expectations of what students should be able to think, know or do when they've completed a given educational program. Each statement should describe one expectation; should not bundle several into one statement. The statements must be clear and easily understood by all faculty in the area/department. (See **Outcomes**)

Learning Outcomes: An operationally defined educational goal, usually a culminating activity, product, or performance that can be measured. (See **Objectives**)

Mapping: Aligning outcomes/objectives with assessment measures.

Means of Assessment: Synonymous with assessment measures. The method that will be used to test students' learning.

Objective Test: A test for which the scoring procedure is completely specified enabling agreement among different scorers. A correct-answer test (multiple choice, true/false, matching).

Peer Review: A panel of assessment peers that review the assessment efforts of faculty and staff throughout university units. A necessary checks and balances system to insure the continual improvement of a university.

Rubric: A rubric implies that a rule defining the criteria of an assessment system is followed in evaluation. A rubric can be an explicit description of performance characteristics corresponding to a point on a rating scale. A scoring rubric makes explicit expected qualities of performance on a rating scale or the definition of a single scoring point on a scale. A kind of holistic or primary trait scoring in which detailed criteria are delineated and used to discriminate among levels of achievement in assignments, performances, or products.

Subjective Test: A test in which the impression or opinion of the assessor determines the score or evaluation of performance. A test in which the answers cannot be known or prescribed in advance (essay tests, fill in the blank without a word bank).

Summative Assessment: Assessment conducted after a program has been implemented and completed to make judgments about its quality or worth compared to previously defined standards. Evaluation at the conclusion of a unit or units of instruction or an activity or plan to determine or judge student skills and knowledge or effectiveness of a plan or activity. Outcomes are the culmination of a teaching/learning process for a unit, subject, or year's study.

(See **Formative Assessment**)

References

American Association of Colleges and Universities (2008) Out Students' Best Work: A Framework for Accountability Worthy of Our Mission, 2nd Edition. Washington, DC.

American Association of Colleges and Universities (2012) Value Project: Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education, <http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org>

Glossary of assessment terms. (2013). Office of Academic Quality, Gallaudet University, Washington DC, Retrieved from www.gallaudet.edu/documents/assessmentglossary.pdf

Maki, P. (2010) Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution, 2nd Edition. Stylus Publishing, Sterling Virginia.

Nichols, J. & K. Nichols (2000). The Departmental Guide and Record Book for Student Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. 3rd Edition, Agathon Press, New York.

Suskie, L. (2009). Assessing Student Learning: A common sense guide, 2nd Edition. Anker Publishing Company: Bolton. Ma.