

Alternative Assessment Methods

While we may have go-to assessment methods that we prefer, one must also consider the many options available. They may be easier to administer, produce better data, and facilitate outcomes.

Session attendees will learn how to:

- employ lesser-known methods of assessing student learning, understanding as well as attitudes.
- facilitate learning and provide effective feedback with assessment.

Qualitative Assessments

Expanded

- Not all assessment methods must be based on typical research methods.
- The overall goal is to understand what students know and/or think as a result of an experience (e.g., workshop, program).

Alternative Assessment Methods

- Rubrics
- Portfolios
- Observations
- Learning Contracts
- Narratives/Reflections
- Reflexive Photography
- Document Review
- One-sentence Summary
- Direct Paraphrasing
- Application Cards
- One-minute Papers
- Muddiest Point
- Empty Outline
- Documented Problem-solving

Rubrics

➤ Uses

- Assess behavior/conduct or oral/written reflections
- evaluate employees or organization members

➤ Detailed/Quality rubrics

- clarify behavioral and learning goals and expectations
- increase reliability/objectivity
- improves feedback quality
- Invites student participation in learning process

Using Rubrics

- Use vetted/established rubrics when possible, but personalize for local use
- Explain the purpose of the assessment with the student and share/discuss the rubric with them.
- Use the rubric to articulate desired learning/development/behavioral outcomes. (whenever possible, do this with students directly)
- Use rubrics to assess reflections, behavior, artifacts, etc.

Portfolios

- Used to evaluate and promote learning
- Serves as an evidence repository for student learning and knowledge transfer (e.g., photos, reflections, StrengthsQuest results)
- Articulate a clear scope and audience (e.g., current and future employers)
- For full effect, staff must provide frequent direction and feedback.
- Portfolios may be hardcopy or digital.

Observation

- Systematize for assessment purposes
- Create an observation protocol
 - location, start/end time
 - 1 column for detailed notes
 - 1 column for reflective notes
- Observation types
 - Participant, Non-Participant, naturalistic, and simulation

Learning Contracts/ Development Plans

- Co-created, personalized plans that describe the intended learning outcomes for an event, semester, year, etc. (e.g., an action plan)
- Promotes students' engagement and ownership in their learning opportunities
- Use rubrics, theory, and/or departmental SLOs to guide contract/plan development
- Identify experiences where these skills are likely to be tested and how these might be assessed (e.g., oral reflection in an 'after action review' or written summative narrative/photo gallery)
- Use contract/plan to guide supervisor/advisor feedback
- Provide frequent feedback and request frequent reflection on related experiences

Sample Learning Contract Protocol

Narratives/Reflections

- Uses metacognition and synthesis to foster learning through live experiences
- may be handwritten, typed, oral, pictorial, etc.
- What? So What? Now What?
 - Describe the experience. What was learned? Where and how was it learned?
 - Describe why this was important and to whom.
 - Describe why/how one could apply what was learned in a future context. What will be done differently based on what was learned?

Document Review

- Use existing documents (e.g., meeting minutes, project tangibles, training exams, etc.) as evidence of learning when applicable
- Collect photos (with captioned explanations/reflections) or other writings that illustrate learning.

CATs!

Angelo and Cross (1993) Classroom Assessment Techniques - CATs

- One-minute Papers
- One-sentence Summaries
- Muddiest Point
- Direct Paraphrasing
- Misconception Checks
- Documented Problem Solving
- Empty Outlines
- Application Cards

The TQA

A Three Question Assessment

- What ideas did this presentation generate for you?
- Did you learn something today that might help you perform your job better.? Please describe.
- What could be changed about this presentation to make it more helpful or effective?

References

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➤ Much of the information provided in this presentation is from Henning, G. W. & Roberts, D. (2016). Student affairs assessment: Theory to practice.