

Choosing the Right Assessment Tools

(Based on Fulks, Janet, "Assessing Student Learning in Community Colleges", Bakersfield College, 2004 obtained at <http://online.bakersfieldcollege.edu/courseassessment/Default.htm>)

Examples of various assessment tools are included in the table below. It should be noted that the categorizations may vary depending upon your perspective and the way in which you construct the assessment.

Tool	Method D= Direct I= Indirect	Domain C= Cognitive P= Psychomotor A= Affective	Usage Type F= Formative S= Summative	Bloom's level K= Knowledge C= Comprehension A= Application ASE= Analysis or Synthesis or Evaluation	Pros	Cons
Multiple Choice Exam	D	C	F or S	K, C If carefully constructed ASE	easy to grade; objective	reduces assessment to multiple choice answers
Licensing Exams	D	C	S	K, C, A	easy to score and compare	no authentic testing, may outdate
Standardized Cognitive Tests	D	C	S	K, C, A?	comparable between students	heavily dependent on exposure to topics on test
Checklists	D	C, A, P	F or S	Variable	very useful for skills or performances; students know exactly what is missing	can minimize large picture and interrelatedness; evaluation feedback is basically a yes/no - present/absent - without detail
Essay	D	C, A	F or S	K, C, A, ASE	displays analytical and synthetic thinking well	time consuming to grade, can be subjective
Case Study	D	C, A	F or S	K, C, A, ASE	displays analytical and synthetic thinking well; connects other knowledge to topic	creating the case is time consuming, dependent on student knowledge form multiple areas
Problem Solving	D	C	F or S	K, C, A, ASE	displays analytical and synthetic thinking well; authentic if real world situations are used	difficult to grade due to multiple methods and potential multiple solutions
Oral Speech	D	C	F or S	Variable K, C, A, ASE	easily graded with rubric; allows other students to see and learn what each student learned; connects general education goals with discipline-specific courses	difficult for ESL students; stressful for students; takes course time; must fairly grade course content beyond delivery
Debate	D	C, A	F or S	K, C, A, ASE	provides immediate feedback to the student; reveals thinking and ability to respond based on background knowledge and critical thinking ability	requires good rubric; more than one evaluator is helpful; difficult for ESL students; stressful for students; takes course time

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Product Creation & Special Reports	D	C, P, A	F or S	Variable K, C, A, ASE	students can display skills, knowledge, and abilities in a way that is suited to them	must have clearly defined criteria and evaluative measures; "the look" can not override the content
Flowchart or Diagram	D	C	F or S	C, A, ASE	displays original synthetic thinking on the part of the student; perhaps the best way to display overall high level thinking and articulation abilities	more difficult to grade, requiring a checklist or rubric for a variety of different answers; difficult for some students to do on the spot
Portfolios	D	C, P	S	Variable	provides the students with a clear record of their work and growth; best evidence of growth and change over time; students can display skills, knowledge, and abilities in a way that is suited to them; promotes self-assessment	Time consuming to grade; different content in portfolio makes evaluating difficult and may require training; bulky to manage depending on size
Exit Surveys	D and I	A	S	ASE	provides good summative data; easy to manage data if Likert-scaled responses are used	Likert scales limit feedback, open-ended responses are bulky to manage
Performance	D	C, P	F or S	Variable K, C, A, ASE	provides best display of skills and abilities; provides excellent opportunity for peer review; students can display skills, knowledge, and abilities in a way that is suited to them	stressful for students; may take course time; some students may take the evaluation very hard - evaluative statements must be carefully framed
Capstone project or course	D	C, P, A	F or S	ASE	best method to measure growth overtime with regards to a course or program - cumulative	focus and breadth of assessment and understanding all the variables to produce assessment results are important; may result in additional course requirements; requires coordination and agreement on standards

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Team Project	D	C, A	F or S	Variable K, C, A, ASE	connects general education goals with discipline-specific courses	must fairly grade individuals as well as team; grading is slightly more complicated; student interaction may be a challenge
Reflective self-assessment essay	D and I	C, A	S	ASE	provides invaluable ability to evaluate affective growth in students	must use evidence to support conclusions, not just self-opinionated assessment
Satisfaction and Perception Surveys	I	C, P, A	S	C, A, ASE	provides good indirect data; data can be compared longitudinally; can be used to determine outcomes over a long period of time	respondents may be influenced by factors other than those being considered; validity and reliability most be closely watched

Assessment Tool Checklist



1.	Does the assessment adequately evaluate academic performance relevant to the desired outcome? (validity)	
2.	Does this assessment tool enable students with different learning styles or abilities to show you what they have learned and what they can do?	
3.	Does the content examined by the assessment align with the content from the course? (Content validity)	
4.	Does this assessment method adequately address the knowledge, skills, abilities, behavior, and values associated with the intended outcome? (Domain validity)	
5.	Will the assessment provide information at a level appropriate to the outcome? (Bloom's)	
6.	Will the data accurately represent what the student can do in an authentic or real life situation? (Authentic assessment)	
7.	Is the grading scheme consistent; would a student receive the <i>same</i> grade for the <i>same</i> work on multiple evaluations? (Reliability)	
8.	Can multiple people use the scoring mechanism and come up with the same general score? (Reliability)	
9.	Does the assessment provide data that is specific enough for the desired outcomes? (alignment with outcome)	
10.	Is the assessment summative or formative - if formative does it generate diagnostic feedback to improve learning?	
11.	Is the assessment summative or formative - if summative, is the final evaluation built upon multiple sources of data? (AAHE Good practice)	
12.	If this is a summative assessment, have the students had ample opportunity for formative feedback and practice displaying what they know and can do?	
13.	Is the assessment unbiased or value-neutral, minimizing an attempt to give desirable responses and reducing any cultural misinterpretations?	
14.	Are the intended uses for the assessment clear? (Grading, program review, both)	
15.	Have other faculty provided feedback?	
16.	Has the assessment been pilot-tested?	
17.	Has the evaluation instrument been normed?	
18.	Will the information derived from the assessment help to improve teaching and learning? (AAHE Good Practice)	
19.	Will you provide the students with a copy of the rubric or assignment grading criteria?	
20.	Will you provide the students examples of model work?	