

Learning Outcomes Assessment and Self-Evaluation

The terms "assessment" and "evaluation" can be used interchangeably (e.g., Gillespie, Hilsen, & Wadsworth, 2002; Weiner, 2010), though some scholars establish a difference between them (e.g., Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). An explanation of the possible difference between assessment and evaluation (and measurement), by Robert Kizlik, can be found in the ADPRIMA website (<http://www.adprima.com/measurement.htm>). Many other definitions and explanations of the two terms can be found in the literature and on the Internet, although these are not always consistent. Our goal is not to take a stand as to whether the terms relate to the same concept or not, but rather to provide resources that can help change and/or improve teaching and learning (thus focusing on formative approaches).

Learning outcomes assessment

There are many tools that can help assess learning outcomes. The book *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers* (Angelo & Cross, 1993), available at the OFD, discusses various projects and provides examples of tools that can be used to assess different aspects of teaching and learning. Other models and further discussion of learning outcomes assessment can be found in the following websites, among others:

- UW/Center for Instructional Development and Research: <http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/resources/catools.html>
- CSU Chico: <http://www.csuchico.edu/vpaa/assessment/toolbox/assessmentStrategies.shtml>
- National Teaching and Learning Forum: <http://www.ntlf.com/html/lib/bib/assess.htm>
- UTC /Teaching Resource Center: <http://www.utc.edu/Administration/WalkerTeachingResourceCenter/FacultyDevelopment/Assessment/assessment.html>
- Ecological Society of America/TIEE: <http://www.esa.org/tiee/teach/essays/evaluation.html>

Formative self-evaluation:

Differently from summative evaluation, which normally happens at the end of the semester, formative evaluation happens during the semester. Feedback from students (and colleagues) may be solicited during the term in an effort to implement any changes that may improve student learning. Formative feedback provides an opportunity to ask what you want to know--i.e., aspects of instruction that directly relate to your situation and your preferred pedagogical approaches (for more on the characteristics of formative feedback, see Weimer, 2010). To learn more about the validity of student feedback, see Michael Theall's "Student ratings: Myths vs. research evidence" <http://studentratings.byu.edu/info/faculty/fc/ratingmyths.htm>.

Here is an example of form that can be used (and adapted) to request feedback from students during the semester.

Mid-course evaluation

Course: _____ Semester/Year: _____ Instructor: _____

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS PAPER

Please read each question carefully. This evaluation is your opportunity to give feedback to your instructor about the course. The evaluation will be used in planning future classes.

Thank you for answering the questions.

1. How do you evaluate the materials used in this course? Which are most/least helpful?
2. What aspects of the course (activities, lecture, reading, homework, etc) help you learn better? What aspects do not help your learn?
3. What could be done (by you and by the instructor) to improve your learning in the course?
4. Please provide any additional comments that have not been addressed above.

References:

Angelo, T., & Cross, P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques; A handbook for college teachers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gillespie, K. H., Hilsen, L., & Wadsworth, E. (2002). *A guide to faculty development: Practical advice, examples, and resources*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Co.

Weimer, M. (2010). *Inspired college teaching: A career-long resource for professional growth*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

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