

Assessment

Learning assessments help faculty measure the effectiveness of their teaching in terms of their students' learning. Although many people equate assessment with the final exam, any learning activity in which the learners receive feedback about their performance can be considered an assessment. The most effective learning experiences provide "formative" assessment at many points throughout the period of instruction so that learners can identify areas of weakness and course-correct along the way. For that reason, it is important to consider assessment early in the course design process. Formative assessment can be contrasted with "summative" assessment, which is conducted at the end of a period of instruction and is used to determine whether or not learners have met the objectives of the instruction.

- Assessment Strategies
- Classroom Assessment Techniques

Assessment Strategies

Tests and quizzes are the most common types of assessments, but are not always the most effective. Some of the more effective assessments for health sciences professions may be simulated patient work (OSCEs) or other measures of observable behavior, where students can receive feedback on their performance. Other options include: case studies, problem-based learning, class participation, briefings/presentations, etc. For complex objectives, you may wish to break the task down into a number of different sub-tasks and use interim assessments to make sure that the students have fully developed all of the skills they need to attain the objective. Integrating a variety of types of assessment throughout your course can give you information about your teaching while also helping learners recognize where they need additional work.

Below are a few links to resources to help you become more familiar with various assessment strategies and methods.

[CONTACT ETI](#) to meet with an ETI colleague for more help planning, designing or constructing your assessments.

- [Carnegie Mellon Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation: Assess Teaching & Learning](#)
 - Provides suggestions and strategies for assessing student learning and performance.
- [Cornell University Center for Teaching Innovation](#)
 - Lays out considerations for measuring student learning as well as some tips for getting started with measuring student learning.
- [Indiana University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning](#)
 - In the context of describing services available at Indiana University, this page provides resources about a variety of methods of formal and informal assessment.

Classroom Assessment Techniques

In the late 1980s, Professors K. Patricia Cross and Thomas A. Angelo gathered a number of what they called “Classroom Assessment Techniques” (CATs) to help improve classroom teaching in higher education. They stated that these techniques are “designed to inform teachers what students are learning in the classroom and how well they are learning it.”¹ They added that “the assessment techniques described in this handbook represent a first attempt to provide suggestions to teachers on how to get concrete feedback about the level and quality of student learning.”² While CATs were designed for use in the face-to-face classroom, many of the techniques can be easily adapted to the DL environment.

Below are a few links to resources to help you begin to think about how you could incorporate CATs in your teaching.

[CONTACT ETI](#) to meet with an ETI colleague to discuss possibilities for implementing CATs.

- [Indiana University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning](#)
 - Explains why you should consider using CATs and provides a few specific examples of CATs along with the level of effort required to implement those CATs.
- [University of Texas Faculty Innovation Center](#)
 - Describes the impact of CATs on instructors and students, identifies characteristics of CATs and gives examples of CATs.
- [Vanderbilt University](#)
 - Explains why and how to use CATs and provides examples.
- [Classroom Assessment Techniques handbook](#)
 - If reading about CATs has piqued your interest in exploring them more deeply, here is a link to the original Cross and Angelo book, which provides criteria for selecting CATs, guidelines for using CATs, and then presents a wide variety of techniques along with information about how to analyze the data you collect when using them. Note: This is a photocopy of a typed text. The authors specifically state that “this is not a book to be read from cover to cover. It's a handbook, a reference book meant to be thumbed through for ideas and inspirations.”³

References:

¹Cross, K. Patricia; Angelo, Thomas A. (1998) Classroom Assessment Techniques. A Handbook for Faculty. National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning, Ann Arbor, MI. Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED317097.pdf>, p. 2, authors' italics.

²Cross, & Angelo, p. 2.

³Cross & Angelo, p.3.