

SPECIAL ISSUE: *Assess for Success*

BY RHONDA SPEARMAN

*It is possible to store the mind with a million facts
and still be entirely uneducated.* —Alec Bourne

Do you know why you give students exams, make them write papers, or present reports? Have you considered never giving an exam, never requiring a paper, or just forgetting about those reports all together? Why do we, as teachers, put ourselves through the tedium and drudgery of grading papers, creating and grading exams, and coming up with other ways for students to demonstrate their learning? Simple: assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Without assessment, we have no way to measure what was taught and learned.

What to Measure

According to the George Lucas Educational Foundation (2002) assessment should:

1. Provide diagnostic feedback
2. Help educators set standards
3. Evaluate progress
4. Relate to a student's progress
5. Motivate performance

Provide Diagnostic Feedback

Assessment can be used to establish the baseline for students' knowledge of a particular subject or field. Once this is determined educators can begin sculpting the curriculum for review of previously learned knowledge and the introduction of new information. This assessment is usually given in the form of pre-tests.

Help Educators Set Standards

How do we determine standards for measuring learning? Each field of study defines how we are to assess students' understanding. Performance on exams, procedures, and application of knowledge are used to establish standards in the field. These standards are usually determined by the governing body of the profession, enforced by the department, and measured by the instructor.

Evaluate Progress

Assessment is more than measuring

individual student performance; it is also used to help instructors measure the class progression through course material. Instructors know that each class is unique and students progress through the material at differing paces. Group dynamics may push students to learn material more quickly, or they may progress more slowly. Instructors can use assessment to determine whether they should make changes in the course structure or implement alternative strategies to help students master content.

Relate to a Student's Progress

Think of learning as a never-ending continuum. As we progress through a field of study there are benchmarks for understanding. Familiar labels help define our place on the continuum: novice, amateur, expert; beginning, intermediate, advanced. Assessment is used to gauge students' progress along this continuum and their readiness to advance to the next level.

Motivate Performance

For student self-evaluation

In an ideal world, all students would have an inherent drive to learn. They would know that every class had meaning and significance in the shaping of their minds and helping them along the path of knowledge. In the real world, we know that students may be more motivated



ILLUSTRATION: SUSANNAH FINLEY

by other factors such as grades. Assessment is used to measure performance and provide feedback to students about gaps in their knowledge base. This feedback should motivate them to study, seek new levels of learning, and apply the knowledge to new situations. Students want to know how they are doing; assessment is how we help them answer this question. Whether students are motivated by the grade, personal excellence, or the thirst for knowledge, assessments help them gauge their place in the continuum of learning.

For teacher self-evaluation

How students perform on the assessments also provides feedback for instructors on whether teaching strategies are working and students are ready to move on to the next level. If the majority of students seem to lack understanding of a concept, this is a signal to the instructor to review this information before moving on. If students seem to be devouring the information and excelling, this is an indicator they may ►

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Assessment and Evaluation...

The CAT is out of the bag

Assessment and evaluation are integral to teaching/learning and are used to guide and improve learning and instruction. However, they have distinct roles.

ASSESSMENT IS:

- Needed to gather information on a regular basis in order to understand student learning and needs.
- Used to determine current understanding and improve subsequent learning.
- Focused on the process of continued improvement.

EVALUATION IS:

- The culminating act of interpreting the information gathered for the purpose of making decisions or judgments about student learning and needs, often at reporting time.
- A determination of mastery of learning goals and objectives.
- A concrete measurement against an existing standard.

CATs [Classroom Assessment Techniques] quickly allow instructors to find out what students are learning, then use that information to make changes in teaching methods or assignments. According to Angelo and Cross (1993), a CAT is characterized as learner-centered, teacher-directed, mutually beneficial to students and instructors, formative, context-specific, ongoing, and rooted in good teaching practice. To assess student:

Prior Knowledge, Recall and Understanding, try:

- **The Minute Paper:** Students address “what was the most important thing you learned in class today?” and “what important question remains unanswered?”

Analysis and Critical Thinking, try:

- **Pro and Con Grid:** Students identify the advantages/disadvantages, costs and benefits, pros and cons of a plan, idea, or concern.

Synthesis and Creative Thinking, try:

- **One Sentence Summary:** Using the format of “who did what to whom, when, where, how, and why?” students answer questions about a process in one clear, long, and grammatically correct sentence.

Problem Solving, try:

- **What’s the Principle?** Students associate specific problems or behavior with the general principles used to solve them.
- **Documented Problem Solutions:** Students keep track of the steps they use to solve a problem, draw conclusions about their own approaches, and discuss.

—Julie Little and Jean Derco

REGISTER FOR ITC’S WORKSHOP

LS 253 Online Assessment Techniques (March 16, 10:10-12:10)

Resources Worth Exploring

- Angelo, T. A., & Cross, P. K. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Field-Tested Learning Assessment Guide for Science, Math, Engineering, and Technology Instructors. (n.d.) *Classroom assessment techniques: An overview*. Retrieved November 11, 2003, from <http://www.flaguide.org/cat/cat.htm>
- Huba, M. E., & Freed, J. E. (2000). *Learner-centered assessment on college campuses*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Palomba, C. A., & Banta, T. W. (1999). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Pennsylvania State University, Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence. (2003). *The big showdown: Assessment vs. evaluation*. Retrieved November 11, 2003, from <http://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/luncheons/012903notes.htm>

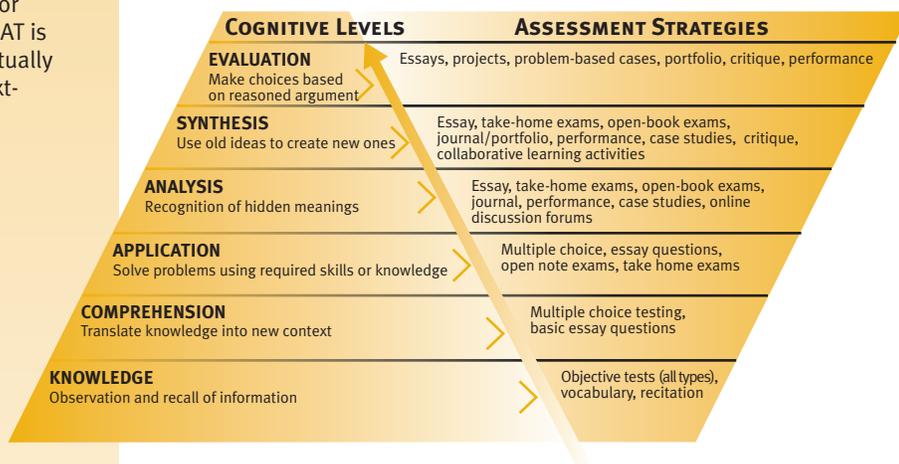
(CONTINUED FROM PG 1)

be capable of handling more in-depth or advanced information. Thus the assessment helps instructors customize the learning experience for the students.

How to Measure

The previous guiding principles help to identify “what” is to be assessed, the student’s level of understanding, and ability to demonstrate that understanding. We look to Bloom’s Taxonomy to provide the framework for formulating assessment measures, or “how” to assess the learning.

Benjamin Bloom provided a hierarchy of student competencies to assist instructors with developing assessment criteria for meeting educational goals and objectives. These competencies are arranged from less to more complex. The more complex the cognitive skill to be measured is, the more subjective the assessment. The following diagram represents Bloom’s Taxonomy in the first pyramid, with Evaluation, Bloom’s highest level on the cognitive scale at the top. The second inverted pyramid lists the variety of assessment techniques that can be used to gauge students’ learning.



Benjamin Bloom’s hierarchy of student competencies assists instructors with developing assessment criteria for meeting educational goals and objectives. The corresponding inverted pyramid illustrates the variety of assessment techniques suitable for each level.

So the next time you give your students an exam or grade a paper, consider how that one assignment addresses not only the student’s understanding of the course objectives, but also your instruction. Reflect on your assessment practices. Here are some questions to get you started:

- Are there opportunities for improvement?
- Am I measuring what I am teaching?
- Does this assessment answer the question I am asking about their learning?
- Is there another way to do this?

Resources

- American Association for Higher Education. (2003). *9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning*. Retrieved November 20, 2003, from <http://www.aahe.org/principl.htm>
- Bloom, B.S. (Ed.) (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals: Handbook I, cognitive domain*. New York; Toronto: Longmans, Green.
- The George Lucas Educational Foundation. (2003). *Instructional Module: Assessment*. Retrieved November 20, 2003, from <http://www.gle.org/assessment/whyassess.html>

Extended Communications: Reaching Students Before and After the Semester

There are a number of compelling reasons, at all levels of the university, for enhancing our ability to communicate with students before a semester begins or after the formal course of instruction has ended. Examination of stated reasons for desiring extended communications reveals some common themes.

Themes for pre-course communications

Pre-course assessments

Use pre-course assessments to conduct a pre-semester assessment of student skills or experience or a body of knowledge review for courses with prerequisites. Accessible online surveys or email minimize the obstacles of time and place while accomplishing these goals.

Orienting functions

A well designed Web site that can provide detailed information, maps, contact

information, or other appropriate resource materials will help orient students to a department, degree program, or individual course.

Community building functions

The number and quality of student “connections” may play an important role in student persistence, retention and progression toward a degree. The Online@UT system (<http://online.utk.edu/>) provides a flexible, convenient, accessible means for organizations to provide information and communications capabilities to students.

Themes for post-course communications

Tracking functions

Post-course communication can help track students’ progression to a major or toward a degree. Current methods include mailing out grade summaries, providing for academic advising, and providing transcripts. Making this information available online encourages students to be more proactive in their academic planning, and may reduce advising demands on faculty and staff.

Mentoring functions

Mentoring often receives insufficient attention due to the time-intensive nature of the work. Using current technologies, it should be possible for us to develop and implement online mentoring programs that effectively distribute the mentoring load among faculty, staff and student mentors.

Networking/professional development

Ongoing communication provides opportunities for developing mentoring relationships between practicing professionals and students still in the program, facilitates internship opportunities, and aids in soliciting feedback to improve the quality and effectiveness of courses and programs. Email, online surveys, and Web sites offer a wide range of options for achieving these goals.

While our desire to communicate with students before and after individual course or program completion is not new, the tools available to us today certainly provide effective, efficient methods of accomplishing our goals. Using available, accessible tools like Web sites, online community tools (Online@UT) and email, we have the means to reach most students at any time that it is reasonable and appropriate to do so. If you’d like to discuss applicable communications tools for achieving your own instructional or program development goals, contact the ITC at itc@utk.edu or call 974-9670.

Call for Proposals



Has your department updated its goals in preparation for the upcoming SACS accreditation? Will you use the same goals for your program, department, or college accreditation program review? Do any of your goals involve infusing and embedding technology into your curriculum? If you answered yes to any of these questions, the ITC is prepared to help.

This summer, the ITC is offering the “C3—Collaboration, Curricula and Customization” experience to faculty. The experience is designed to help you realize your instructional goals as they relate to your overall departmental goals. Proposals are welcome from all Knoxville campus programs, departments and colleges and are due **March 26, 2004.**

A College of Social Work participant from last summer stated that “it was terrific and we all felt that we learned a lot. We’re excited about helping our the college move forward with using technology to enhance our teaching.”

Some examples of the challenges your department may be interested in exploring with the ITC include (but are not limited to):

- Conducting an audit of accessibility related to course materials and resources.
- Exploring alternative assessment techniques.
- Integrating technology into the core of the curriculum in a systematic way.
- Exploring how technology fits into your goals and stated outcomes.

For additional information about departmental assistance, see <http://itc.utk.edu/workshops/>

Jumpstart your Online@UT skills by attending our new 1-hour skill-intensive workshops. Look for workshops with the Feature Focus label. <http://itc.utk.edu/workshops>

Mystery of the Rubric...Solved

What constitutes excellent work in your courses? Have you ever tried to describe the characteristics of excellent work—if only for yourself? Do your students know what you consider to be excellent? How well do your students know the standards against which their work will be compared? How would it affect student learning if you told students what you are looking for in their work? Are you confident that you apply the same criteria to all students’ work when you grade assignments or is there a possibility that your criteria shift as you work through the papers or projects?

Using a rubric just might be the answer for you. What exactly is a rubric? Webster defines a rubric as “an authoritative rule.” When applied to the

assessment of student work, a rubric outlines the scoring “rules” for an assignment. A carefully designed rubric, defining precise criteria for success, is helpful to both instructors and students. For students, it provides key criteria that inform their development, revision, and judgment of their own work. For instructors, it helps reduce grading subjectivity, reduces student grade anxiety, and drives pedagogy.

Rubrics are classified as either analytic or holistic. Analytic rubrics detail performance levels for each stated performance criterion. Using analytic rubrics, instructors are able to assess each part of the whole assignment or product.

Holistic rubrics, on the other hand, do not detail separate levels of performance for each stated performance criterion. Instead, holistic rubrics use multiple criteria as a whole to assess overall performance. In many instances, analytic rubrics can easily be converted into holistic rubrics.

A rubric is typically a one or two page document that should be shared with students at the same time an assignment is made. It should be carefully reviewed with students to ensure a shared understanding about the assignment and the performance standards. A popular format for rubrics is a grid. The rows of the grid list the performance criteria (what counts) for the assignment or project. The columns of the grid contain descriptions of quality or levels of achievement, which usually are assigned a numeric value. An analytic rubric might employ the following framework:

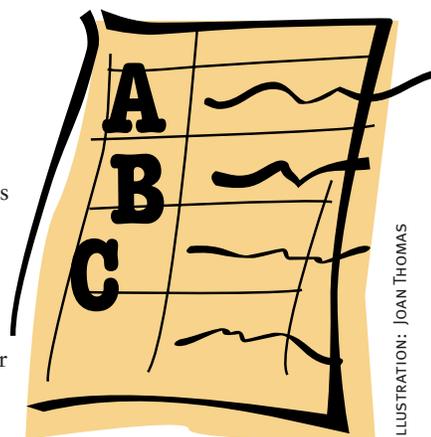


ILLUSTRATION: JOAN THOMAS

New Resources on the Web

ShareIT

(Sharing Ideas and Technology for Teaching)

The ShareIT (Sharing Ideas and Technology for Teaching) Web site is a repository of ideas and resources to help you expand your teaching strategies. You may search the database for exciting teaching strategies, for web-based modules, for learning objects, or for other technology-based course materials. You are also encouraged to submit your own best practice(s). You may submit either a successful teaching strategy or any course materials you wish to share. You’ll need to log in with your UT NetID and password in order make a contribution to the ShareIT database.

Access the ShareIT database at <http://itc.utk.edu/shareit>.

—JR

Analytic Rubric Construction Guide

Target Objectives	Excellent (5 points)	Good (4 points)	Average (3 points)	Fair (2 points)	Poor (1 point)
Objective 1	Performance Indicator (p.i.)				
Objective 2	(p.i.)	(p.i.)	(p.i.)	(p.i.)	(p.i.)
Objective 3	(p.i.)	(p.i.)	(p.i.)	(p.i.)	(p.i.)
Objective 4	(p.i.)	(p.i.)	(p.i.)	(p.i.)	(p.i.)
General comments and total score:					

The notion of using rubrics sounds good, but how does one get started creating one for a specific assignment? Good rubrics are the product of a thorough analysis of existing samples of student work. Consider for a moment how you currently grade student assignments. You probably spend time reading and sorting student work into piles of differing quality. How often do you stop and take a look at how the piles differ, and more importantly, why they differ? This analysis is the first step in establishing appropriate descriptors for quality or levels of achievement for the assignment. It will also help you examine and re-examine your target performance objectives (what counts) on the assignment.

While rubric creation can be time consuming, the payoff for both instructors and students is great. Learning increases when learners have a sense of what they are setting out to learn, a statement of explicit standards they must meet, and way of seeing what they have learned (Loaker, Cromwell, & O’Brien, 1986, p. 47).

References

- Loacker, G., Cromwell, C., & O’Brien, K. (1986). *Assessment in higher education: To serve the learner*. In Adelman, C., *Assessment in American higher education* (pp. 47-62). Washington, DC: US Department of Education.
- Huba, M.E. & Freed, J. E. (2000). *Learner-centered assessment on college campuses: Shifting the focus from teaching to learning*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.



Honesty in Testing

Technological advances that change the traditional classroom environment create both opportunities and challenges in testing and evaluation. Although additional contact openings, augmented communication channels, and automation all present an instructor with more tools and chances to assess student progress, the setting under which the instructor takes these measurements is more fluid and less susceptible to control. Instead of measuring learning in the classroom laboratory, the teacher will often be “field testing.”

Sometimes, that’s irrelevant. In the case of practice or self tests, automatic grading and increased availability of testing materials are advantages that outweigh the minimal disadvantages of the instructor’s loss of control. When such measures count for credit and grades, however, the situation becomes more problematic. Outside a controlled testing environment, authentic evaluation of student performance carries an additional burden to ensure integrity of the testing process.

The first question the instructor should ask in the enhanced academic setting is no different than that asked in the traditional classroom: What am I trying to measure and why? A bad test will generate even worse results in a non-traditional environment than in the brick-and-mortar classroom because 1) students will have greater opportunity to exploit testing flaws; 2) confusing or poorly worded tests will take place under conditions that allow few student-instructor interactions.

If the instructor has used open-book tests in the past, that will be to his or her advantage in adapting to the online environment. Additionally, the teacher needs to communicate with the students the expectations of them that come with moving outside traditional classroom strictures. One much-touted advantage of educational technology is increased collaboration, so the instructor must delineate carefully where collaboration ends and cheating begins. For which assignments is collaboration okay and for which will it be forbidden? Even within the physical classroom, instructors have to consider the collaborative opportunities present whenever students are able to go wireless.

Plagiarism is an especially pernicious problem, not so much because of technologically enhanced teaching—a term paper written on paper with ink is almost as easy to copy as one generated by laser printer—but because of student access via search engine to virtually the full scope of human knowledge...including term-paper mills. Combatting plagiarism requires the instructor be aware of the problem and how easy the Internet makes it, but also to strive for original measurements to begin with. Don’t plagiarize your evaluative measures and it will be harder for students to plagiarize their responses!

Here are some additional online sources for practical tips on using technologically enhanced evaluations:

<http://www.ncei.org/blackboard/testingadvice.html>

http://www.ibritt.com/resources/vp_plagiarism.htm

<http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/Articles/security/start.htm>

<http://www.ion.illinois.edu/IONresources/assessment/cheating.asp>

2004 Teaching with Technology Grants Awarded

The Innovative Technology Center (ITC) recently awarded the 2004 Teaching with Technology Grants. The focus of the TWT grant is the creation of modular pieces of instruction for Web-based delivery. The grant was awarded to five departments that each have two to five faculty members working collaboratively to create at least five modular pieces of instruction. Departments are awarded \$15,000 each, which can be used to purchase computing equipment and/or hire students for development tasks. The ITC provides training, support, and ongoing consultation throughout the grant cycle. For additional information, please see http://itc.utk.edu/grants/twt2004/twt2004_rec.shtml

DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES AND DEPARTMENT OF PLANT SCIENCES

Interactive SAS Teaching/Learning Modules

Bob Auge, *Professor*

Arnold Saxton, *Professor*

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Instructional Modules to Support Ecological Design in Architecture Classes

Mark DeKay, *Associate Professor*

Tracy Moir-McClean, *Associate Professor*

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

Technology Enhanced Course Material Preparation

John Collier, *Professor*

John Prados, *Professor*

Fred Weber, *Associate Professor*

DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY STUDIES

Extended Explorations in the Development of Critical Thinking Through Visual Literacy

Deborah Tegano, *Associate Professor*

Mary Jane Moran, *Assistant Professor*

DEPARTMENT OF ENTOMOLOGY AND PLANT PATHOLOGY

Impact of Insects and Plant Diseases on Human Societies

Jerome Grant, *Professor*

Paris Lambdin, *Professor*

Making the Most of Online Assessment

The most popular debate concerning online assessment—that is, how do we prevent our students from cheating?—has, in recent years, given ground to one more vital and, ultimately, more productive: How do we integrate online assessment, in its many and varied guises, into an effective and pedagogically-sound curriculum? How, in other words, do we use the tools at our disposal to best promote the stuff of learning: knowledge recall, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation?

Continuing improvements to Online@UT, in combination with increased bandwidth, storage capacity, and computer literacy among students and faculty, have provided us with a wealth of online assessment options. Few of us use them to their full potential, however. Below is a general introduction to a few of these tools, accompanied by practical and proven strategies for implementation.

Online Quizzes

Online@UT's most popular assessment feature is its quiz tool, and for good reason. Automated grading, instant feedback, and a user-friendly interface eliminate much (but not all) of the grunt work typically associated with creating and grading those multiple-choice, short-answer, and true/false quizzes with which we measure knowledge recall and comprehension.

Students like online quizzes, too, but for different and, occasionally, less honorable reasons. You should assume that your students are taking your quizzes with their books open and in the company of their classmates. Use this knowledge to your advantage—set a time limit on each quiz, randomize the ordering of your questions, draw questions from a large test bank, and, perhaps most importantly, provide good feedback to reinforce important learning goals.

Digital Drop Box and Assignment Tool

If you've ever asked students to submit electronic documents to you via email, then you've probably had that experience of opening your mail to find forty messages waiting, each using different naming conventions, and each downloading (slowly) onto your hard drive. Managing files can quickly become a burden. The Digital Drop Box is a depository of sorts on the Blackboard server into which your students can spill their documents, thus keeping them off of your computer. One nice perk of the Digital Drop Box is that each document is time-stamped and dated.

Blackboard 6.0 also introduces the Assignment Tool, a new feature that, like the Digital Drop Box, facilitates the transfer of electronic documents but with improved functionality.

Most importantly, the Assignment Tool is fully integrated into the electronic gradebook. When you create an Assignment, the gradebook automatically generates a new entry into which you can enter point or letter grades.

Discussion Boards and the Virtual Classroom

Along with email, Online@UT also facilitates student-teacher and student-student communication via its synchronous and asynchronous tools. The discussion board, in particular, can be a site of genuine learning where students are expected to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate course content. Such critical discussion, however, does not happen by accident. It is your responsibility to establish clear standards for participation (even stating them in your syllabus) and to steer the discussion in a productive direction by asking quality questions.

Additional Recommendations:

- Determine specific grading criteria. How often will students be expected to participate? What constitutes a "good" post? How will online communication factor into the student's final grade?
- Model best practices. Your posts should exemplify exactly what you expect from your students.
- Provide specific feedback. Students are motivated by your response. Short, generic responses like "Good job" and "I agree" will likely be interpreted as a lack of interest on your part.

Group Work

Finally, Online@UT allows you to break students into smaller groups providing them with an opportunity to collaborate on projects and to participate in closed discussions. Group members can share information with one another through email, through the Student Pages within Blackboard, and through a members-only Discussion Board and Virtual Classroom. Again, you are responsible for providing specific grading criteria.

Suggested Activities

- Ask group members to peer review their formal writing assignments by attaching electronic documents to a discussion thread.
- At the beginning of each unit, assign a research topic to a group, who will then be expected to work together to synthesize and evaluate the material before presenting it to the class as a whole.
- Give your groups a case study and assign specific roles to each member. Rotate roles throughout the semester so that each student will gain the full breadth of practical experience.

The screenshot shows the Online@UT interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for My Institution, Courses, Community, UT Libraries, and Technology@UT. Below this is a sidebar with a navigation menu including Announcements, Course Information, Check Your Grade, Meet Instructors, Course Documents, Assignments, Discussion Board, and Communication Tools. The main content area shows a discussion board thread for 'COURSES > CMS 110: INTRODUCTION TO ONLINE@UT > COMMUNICATIONS > DISCUSSION BOARD'. The thread title is 'using online@ut' and it includes several replies with titles like 'Re: using online@ut', 'Online@UT use in SEM Seminar', 'PRSSA Grades', 'enhanced teaching', 'using blackboard', 'Re: using blackboard', 'using blackboard with interns', 'Blackboard: something old...someth...', 'Using Blackboard', and 'Re: Using Blackboard'. On the right side of the thread, there are names of users: Woi, Wac, Lad, McC, Hoff, Call, Stud, Gort, Harr, Wel, Wall, and Sni.

The screenshot shows an online quiz titled 'Test Your Understanding'. The 'Name' field is 'Test Your Understanding'. The 'Instructions' are: 'The questions in this quiz cover information you have actual interaction with the tool. Please answer to the prior to your face-to-face session.' The 'Multiple Attempts' are 'NOT ALLOWED. This test may only be taken once.' The 'Force Completion' is 'This test may be saved and resumed later.' The first question is a 'Multiple Choice' question: 'When you login to Online@UT, you use your [select only one]'. The options are: 'Social security number and birth date', 'Bank PIN and first name', 'NetID and password', and 'Last name and phone number'. The second question is a 'Multiple Answer' question.

Online assessment tools are available from within your Blackboard courses. Use the Online Discussion Board (shown on top) to engage students in critical discussions. Use the Online Quiz tool (bottom) for student review.

How Do I Grade This?

Designing Rubrics for Multimedia Projects

Pervasive technology, with its new tools such as digital cameras and wireless networks, extends the reach of human creativity. Now educators have begun incorporating these tools into the learning process, allowing students to exhibit their knowledge through complex, interactive solutions.

Why would you incorporate multimedia projects into your assessment structure? First, you are expanding the choices by which students demonstrate their knowledge and their mastery in your course, potentially engaging the learner at a deeper level. Second, you are moving beyond traditional assessments such as multiple-choice questions, essays, and the infamous 25-page paper of past graduate studies. Third, you are modeling for them what the professional world will be doing, allowing students to apply the professional practices and skills that will be required for success in tomorrow's world.

Traditional assessment happened in a defined space between a student and a professor. With collaborative and problem-based learning becoming more prevalent, the structure of assessment has changed. Your students may no longer be "writing" just for you. A next generation assignment might contain four core elements: subject, purpose/goal, media, and audience.

Electronic media is the new element in this mix, and the rubrics/criteria by which we examine projects that move beyond text are under development. If the project can now be a series of Web pages, a PowerPoint presentation, or a video, how are you going to assess that project? How are you going to determine if the student has provided evidence of mastery?

With visual, multimedia-based outcomes, both student and teacher need a core understanding of the assessment standard upon which the assignment will be judged. Both groups must also understand elements of visual literacy and multimedia architecture. A common mistake of students in creating a digitally enhanced project is the over-emphasis on the tool while neglecting the subject. The technology should not impede access to the content; it should enhance the content. As the instructor, it's easy to become intimidated by the latest-and-greatest techniques that you may not have yet mastered. A rubric for technology assessment could include any of the following areas:

Subject

- Thesis statement
- Logic and flow of paragraphs
- Authentic sources
- Persuasive writing
- Depth of understanding
- Supporting details
- Evidence of synthesis of ideas

Purpose

- Project meets the desired outcomes
- Project exhibits mastery of the subject

Scope

- Content covered to depth and breadth required by assignment

Appropriate Use of Media

- Effective use of the technology
- Enhances the exploration of the subject
- Magnifies the subject
- Consistent with professional models of practice

Navigation Through the Content

- Content clearly ordered
- Includes introduction, supporting content, and conclusion

- Navigational elements (buttons, links, etc.) consistent and easy to use
- Content easy to proceed through
- Provided links assist in movement through content

Creativity and Vision

- Demonstrates a unique point of view

Visuals

- Supporting images included
- Visuals engage the user
- Font choices legible
- Text size easy to read
- Colors complementary to the subject
- Readable length of text on each page

Audience

You may have defined the audience as you, the students' peers, or a mock boss or client.

- Language appropriate to the audience
- Project has the potential to impact the reader
- Colors and style consistent with other types of media that speak to the particular target group or individual

Submit Your Request for Student Help from ITC

The ITC's Student Technology Assistants for Research and Teaching (START) Program is an elite group of students, selected and trained by the Innovative Technology Center. This group of students is prepared to assist faculty with the creation of computer-based course materials and to provide faculty with technical support to enhance courses taught on the Knoxville campus.

Need help with your online course site?
Need to ensure that your course materials are accessible to those with disabilities?
Need assistance with multimedia projects?

Examples of materials that students can help you with include:

- PowerPoint presentations
- Online@UT (Blackboard) course sites
- Web-based tutorials and resources
- Digital audio, video and/or images
- Instructional PDFs
- Electronic documents that are fully accessible to those with disabilities

This service is scheduled to be available March 1, 2004. Faculty and instructors are encouraged to submit requests at any time, as requests will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

To submit a request for assistance, please send an email to start@itc.utk.edu that includes the following information:

- Name
- Department
- Campus Address
- Office Phone
- Email
- Description of Your Project/Need(s)
- Deadline
- Times you are available to meet during Spring 04

<http://itc.utk.edu/start>



9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessment

According to the American Association of Higher Education (2003), the “Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning” (<http://www.aahe.org/principl.htm>) are:

- ① The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
- ② Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
- ③ Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
- ④ Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
- ⑤ Assessment works best when it is ongoing not episodic.
- ⑥ Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.
- ⑦ Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.
- ⑧ Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.
- ⑨ Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.



ITC TOPICS ▶ SPRING 2004

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