Student Assessment

It is critical that as you design each lesson, unit, module, or course, you always consider ways to evaluate whether the learner has mastered the learning objectives. You want to provide ways that the student can participate in **formative** and **summative assessment** activities.

Beyond the multitude of **formative assessment opportunities** given to learners, such as self-check exercises, there are some indicators of success that teachers can look out for and determine where appropriate scaffolding might occur. One of the most powerful indicators of success in distance education is **early submission of materials**. Students that submit early or punctually are more likely to satisfactorily complete the course. So, one of the first things you want to do is to watch when those first assignments come in. If the instructor sees stragglers, the instructor should contact "straggling" students and let them know that the instructor missed seeing their work. This interaction can spur students on to making progress in the course.

For additional information and hints about assessment, please see the SUNY Oswego Assessment Main Page at http://www.oswego.edu/~shindler/authas.html.

As you develop evaluation activities, you want to ensure that your assessment tools actually measure the stated objectives. Students use the objectives as indicators of what is important in the course. You should also consider using a variety of assessment techniques in order to allow the learner to "show what they know" in a positive light. Here are some examples of formative (during the course) and summative (at the end of a course or module) evaluations:

Formative Assessment Ideas:

- Self-check activities
- Email buddies
- Email the instructor
- Journal

Summative Assessment Ideas:

- Portfolios
- Presentations
- Debates
- Interview
- Paper that allows the user to compare and contrast topic with another concept in the field
- "Traditional" test

The more assessment techniques you use during a course increases the probability you will find at least one avenue where the learner can excel.

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