



Common Assessment Tools and Instruments

Created by Nicki Rehn

What	Notes
Classroom generated quizzes and exams (open book, closed book, take home, MC, short-answer, fill-in-the-blank, matching, long response, skills tests).	These are an in-the-moment, line-in-the-sand, measure of something. There are normally easy to score numerically and efficient to give. However, it is easy to hide behind the numbers rather than interrogate the learning (i.e., it's rare to ask, "What does this score mean?"). Also, it's very difficult to make evaluative conclusions from these results because of other variables (poor memory, test anxiety, narrowness of factual recall). Often given under a time restraint. Students are often familiar with this "genre" of evaluation.
Portfolios	These could contain student's best work or a series of their work over time to show growth. Might also include a summary package of what was learned. Portfolios are often time consuming to compile. Evaluation criteria vary greatly.
Work sample	A single piece of data to show in the moment learning.
Informal checks for understanding	Visible Thinking routines, Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATS), surveys, Kahoot, exit slips...etc. Can be used for informing your practice, promoting learning, or collected as data for future reference.
Performance tasks, products, presentations, and projects	Complex challenges that mirror the issues and problems faced in the real world to see if a student can "do" something. Leads to 'assessment-as-learning'. Often collaborative to mimic real-life challenges. Criteria may vary, but often focuses on process as well as final product. They almost always come a rubric. Can be difficult to judge because other factors might impact your ability to see the learning – quality of presentation, other skills called into play..etc. The 'genre' of assessment might not be familiar to the students and so extra time might be required to equip students to be successful.

Observations and conversations/interviews	These are only really useful as assessment if you record them. Can be done anecdotally, or with a specific goal in mind. Oral exams and exit interviews fall under this category. They are quite time consuming and impractical if you have a large class.
Ability tests	Practicum checklists, reading level testing, pre-testing, skills testing, standardized testing, educational psychology testing...etc.
Audio or video recordings	These could be used to capture student explanations, reflections, or oral presentations.
Self-assessment	Checklists or reminders to help students see their own progress. Often used to determine contribution and effort. Builds metacognition.
Non-graded feedback	Written comments on papers or projects to guide improvement.
Exhibitions	MakerFairs, art exhibitions, robotics competitions, performances. Usually evaluated by public.
Formally composed written work	Could be a research essay, a reading response, or any sort of formal paper. Assumes that understanding can be demonstrated by articulating and organizing in written form. Writing is a skill in itself, with which many students struggle. Keep this in mind if using writing assignments to reveal learning.
Lab reports	Often used to keep students accountable to engage with process.
External exam or test	A standardized test that is designed and administered separately from the course.
Journal	Generally used to capture transformation, engagement, and sense-making. These are hard to evaluate and score.
Behaviour, participation, professionalism	Criteria often includes attendance, punctuality, engagement with the course activities, respect, effort...etc. More often than not, this is used as a motivating tool rather than an assessment of outcomes.
Pass/fail competency checklists	Behaviours that must be observed to receive a pass (practicum tasks, lab work, shop work, role play). You need to figure out what the minimum standard is for passing.
Annotated Bibliography	Keeps students accountable to have read widely and reviewed/captured key ideas without getting tangled in the weeds of a formal paper. Can assess a student's ability to synthesize research literature.

Workbook questions	Mostly just measures their completion of homework. Completing assigned homework should lead to learning so assigning value to this makes it assessment-as-learning.
Online threaded discussion	Depending on how it is set up and the kinds of questions that are asked, this can be used to assess thinking, sense-making, and argument, assuming students can articulate it in writing.
Case study analysis	Students are given a scenario (under test conditions, for homework, or as a group project) and required to analyze the situation, make decisions or recommendations, or solve problems. These are great for revealing process skills.
Non-disposable assessments	These are authentic tasks that contribute to real communities and are judged by real audiences. Including a non-disposable task into your course changes your role from “judge and executioner” to “coach and advocate”. They are time consuming but offer a rich learning experience for students.