

The ToolBox

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A Teaching and Learning Resource for the Faculty of Indiana Wesleyan University



Different Ways of Assessing Knowledge

In the book *Schools That Learn*, contributor Bena Kallick provides the following illustration of the three different types of knowledge that learners must acquire:

“Imagine that you have a teenage son who is old enough to get a driver’s license — and you are a little nervous about it. You drive him to the licensing agency to take the multiple-choice written test on state driving laws. When he returns with a big grin to tell you that he scored well, you are pleased and relieved. At least he knows the shape of a stop sign, the speed limit in a school zone, and the need to yield to pedestrians. He has proven his mastery of *formal knowledge*: He knows (or knows where to find) the academic, explicit, codified facts that any expert would need at his or her fingertips.

But are you ready to turn him loose with an automobile? Probably not.... Eventually, after further hours of instruction behind the wheel, he passes the full-performance driving test. He proudly brings home his provisional driver’s license. He’s demonstrated *applicable knowledge*: the ability to transfer into action, even in situations that are less than routine. Under a variety of conditions, he has the proficiency he needs to produce results.

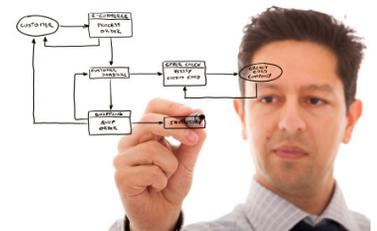
You congratulate him, and he immediately asks for the keys to the car. What do you do now? The tests — both the written and the performance test — are inadequate in themselves. All they show is that he knows how to pass the tests....

Formal tests, even good ones, are not enough to assess learning authentically. Before your son can drive the car (or at least mine) alone, he must also show signs of *longitudinal knowledge*: the basic capability for acting effectively over time in a way that leads to ongoing improvement, effectiveness, and innovation” (pp. 186-187).

Formal Knowledge
“Knowing (or knowing where to find) the academic, explicit, codified facts that any expert would need...” (p. 186)



Applicable Knowledge
“The ability to transfer knowledge into action, even in situations that are less than routine...” (p. 187)



Longitudinal Knowledge
“The basic capability for acting effectively over time, in a way that leads to ongoing improvement, effectiveness and innovation...” (p.187)

Alternative Assessment Tips and Strategies

The No-Fault Quiz

As reported by Sporer (2001), students often ask the question, "Can I get extra credit?" One way to provide this opportunity in a meaningful way is the "No-Fault Quiz." Students are given a 5-15 question quiz (i.e., multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank) covering the previous week's content. Points gained on the No-Fault Quiz count as extra credit, and points that may be "missed" do not count against the student. Answers to the questions are provided immediately after the quiz. Student performance is recorded, but students take away the quiz questions that can later serve as a source for review.

Sporer, R. (2001, Spring). The no-fault quiz. *College Teaching*, 49(2), 61.

Hand-In Dates

Typically, course syllabi specify the assignments that students are expected to complete during the semester and the dates that each of those assignments are due. An alternative is the "Hand-In Date" strategy:

- At the beginning of the semester, students are provided with a list of the assigned projects, papers, and presentations that are to be completed.
- Instead of providing specific due dates for each assignment, the instructor provides a series of "Completion Dates" (e.g., Completion Date #1, Completion Date #2).
- Students choose the order in which they complete the assigned tasks for the semester and are merely required to submit one completed assignment on each of the designated "Completion Dates."

This strategy provides students with an opportunity to make decisions about which assignments they can complete first and which assignments will require the greatest amount of time to complete. Additionally, this strategy provides an opportunity to "front load" assignments and prevents the common practice of requiring a massive amount of completed work during the final two weeks of the semester.



Exit Cards

In a recent article, Davies and Wavering (1999) describe a procedure for encouraging students to engage in ongoing reflection about their learning. "Exit Cards" provide a strategy for students to process what they are learning and to apply that information to their chosen discipline of study. On a weekly basis, students are asked to complete a 5 x 8 card that contains three questions:

- What
- So What?
- Now What?

The "What?" question focuses on the content presented and learned during a particular class session. The "So What?" question is designed to elicit a summary of the main points that were discussed and reviewed during the week. The "Now What?" question requires students to relate that content to their lives, learning, and future roles and responsibilities.

Davies, M., & Wavering, M. (1999, Fall). Alternative assessment: New directions in teaching and learning. *Contemporary Education*, 71(1), 39.

Is That Right!?!?!?

Tests and quizzes should be seen as valuable learning experiences. A way of maximizing the information contained on a test is to review the "correct" answers at the end of the class period. A twist on this review process is to provide an opportunity for students to defend alternatives to the "correct" response.



Students must defend their alternative responses with more than an opinion. They must substantiate their chosen alternative with data derived from course texts and readings, class lectures and discussions. This provides for lively banter and sometimes leads to a conclusion of more than one "right" answer.

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