

## **“Good Assessment”**

All educators, no matter the context or subject, have an interest in measuring their students' learning. However, actually measuring learning is not a trivial task. This presentation will explore the importance of assessment, alternative modes of assessment, and practical techniques you can take to your jobs as educators.

**Why assess student learning?**

**What is wrong with “teaching to the test”?**

**What is a “valid” assessment?**

**The challenge of creating a valid assessment**

**The root of the problem: people “compartmentalize” what they learn**

**Assessment criteria – a teacher’s perspective**

**Assessment modes** (see other side of paper)

**To grade or not to grade . . . different ways to mark assessments**

**What to do with marks?**

**The emotional side of assessment**

**Testing the test!**

**Summary advice for good assessments**

Assessment Mode	Validity	Development	Administration
Written – essay			
Written – short answer			
Written – multiple choice			
Written – true/false			
Oral (interview style)			
Hands-on demonstration			
Computer simulated demonstration			

Rank each of these assessment modes on a 0 to 10 scale for the following criteria (10 meaning great and 0 meaning poor):

**Validity** – How well does this mode of assessment actually measure practicability of new learning? 10 means it perfectly measures the student’s ability to put their learning into action, while 0 means it has no relevance at all to the student’s ability to apply their learning in a real situation.

**Development** – How much time, effort, and/or money is required to initially prepare the assessment. This includes any capital expenses. 0 means completely impractical and 10 means very easy.

**Administration** – How much time, effort, and/or money is required to conduct the assessment with students? This includes any consumable expenses, interruptions to business, and labor to mark the results. 0 means completely impractical and 10 means very easy.

Multiply the number scores for each assessment mode to indicate its worth on a 0 to 1000 scale. I recommend multiplying the scores rather than adding, so that any “0” score is truly regarded as a “deal-breaker.”

This simple ranking scheme may be applied to specific assessments, not just general categories. Any existing (or planned) assessment strategy may be evaluated as per these criteria as a means of reflectively improving your assessment processes. The goal here is to ask yourself, “What would it take to raise the worth of this assessment?” “How can this assessment be made more valid?” “How can its development cost be lowered?” “How can we cut the cost to administer it?”

Note that this should not be used as a way to select the one “best” way to assess learning. Multiple assessment methods have merit in being able to measure a wider range of abilities and contexts.