

Foundations of Assessment

Unless specified, definitions for terms come from:

Palomba, C. A. & Banta, T. W. (1999). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Assessment:

- A set of processes designed to improve, demonstrate, and inquire about student learning outcomes.

Formative Assessment:

- Aimed at improvement
- Meant to “form” the program
- Conducted during the life of a program with the purpose of providing feedback that can be used to modify, shape, and improve the program.

Summative Assessment:

- Aimed at demonstration of accountability
- To make judgments about a program
- Conducted after a program has been in operation for a while, or at its conclusion, or to make judgments about its quality or worth compared to previously defined standards for performance.
- The activities of summative assessment can be used to help form the program for the future

Goal/Objective:

- Used to express intended results in general terms.
- Describes broad learning concepts such as clear communication, problem solving, and ethical awareness.

Outcome:

- Used to express intended results in specific terms.
- Describe what students must know, do, and value.

Performance Indicator:

- “Specific, measurable statements identifying the performance required to meet the outcome; confirmable through evidence” (Rogers, 2010, p. 4).

Direct Assessment Approach:

- Direct measures of learning require students to display their knowledge and skills (e.g., objective tests, essays, presentations, classroom assignments, performance)

Indirect Assessment Approach:

- Indirect methods ask students to reflect on their learning rather than to demonstrate it (e.g., surveys, interviews)

Quantitative Methods:

- Rely on numerical scores and ratings
- Goal is to understand what

Qualitative Methods:

- Rely on descriptions (e.g., ethnographic field studies, logs, journals, participant observation, open-ended questions on interviews and surveys)
- Goal is to provide a narration or description about what is occurring with an emphasis on illuminating the meaning of behavior.

Additional Source:

Rogers, G. (2010) Defining student outcomes. *ABET Webinar*. Retrieved from:
http://www.abet.org/uploadedFiles/Events/Webinars/Defining_Student_Outcomes.pdf

