



# Assessment & Evaluation - Leveraging Blackboard

July 2011

## What is the Difference?

The primary objective for using the strategy or tool determines its purpose. Is the data to be gathered for assessment, evaluation or both?

- **Assessment** is classroom research to provide useful feedback for the improvement of teaching and learning. Assessment is feedback from the student to the instructor about the student's learning.
- **Evaluation** uses methods and measures to judge student learning and understanding of the material for purposes of grading and reporting. Evaluation is feedback from the instructor to the student about the student's learning.

## Classroom Assessment

Classroom assessment is the observation of students in the process of learning, the collection of frequent feedback on students' learning, and the design of modest classroom experiments that provide information on how students learn and how students respond to particular teaching approaches. Classroom assessment helps individual college teachers obtain **useful feedback on what, how much, and how well their students are learning**. Faculty can then use this information to refocus their teaching to help students make their learning more efficient and more effective.

**The purpose of classroom assessments is to improve student learning.**

### Characteristics of Classroom Assessment

- **Learner-Centered:** focuses the primary attention of teachers and students on observing and improving learning, rather than on observing and improving teaching.
- **Teacher-Directed:** respects the autonomy, academic freedom, and professional judgment of faculty. Individual teachers decide what to assess, how to assess, and how to respond to the information gained through the assessment.
- **Mutually Beneficial:** requires active

participation of students and faculty. When students participate more actively, and feel more confident that they can succeed, they are likely to do better in their course work. As teachers work closely with students to assess learning, they improve their teaching skills and gain new insights.

- **Formative:** is formative rather than summative. Summative assessments include tests and other graded evaluations. Formative, on the other hand, are almost never graded and are almost always anonymous. Their aim is to provide faculty with information on what, how much, and how well students are learning.
- **Context-Specific:** need to respond to the particular needs and characteristics of the teachers, students, and disciplines to which they are applied. Being context-specific means: what works in one class will not necessarily work in another.
- **Ongoing:** an ongoing process, perhaps best thought of as the creation and maintenance of a classroom "feedback loop." Changes are made based on the classroom research results and student feedback.
- **Builds on Good Teaching Practices:** Most faculty already collect some feedback on their students' learning and use that feedback to inform their teaching.

Classroom Assessment is an attempt to build on existing good practice by making it more systematic, more flexible, and more effective.

## Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATS):

- **Climate Surveys** – Feedback of teaching/ learning methods used, text, pace, format of class, etc -- *use the Survey tool in Blackboard to present anonymous surveys to students.*
- **Muddiest Point** – Individual student input for what is still unclear -- *use Discussion Boards, Journals or Blogs to gather data in Blackboard.*
- **Minute Paper** – What was most useful that

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you learned? What questions remain? *Gather student input using Discussion Boards, Journals or Blogs.*

- **PreTest and PostTest** – Questions to show overview of course content; used for first day to show depth and breadth of topics covered and last day to show what learning has occurred -- *use Blackboard testing features to gather information from students.*
- **Embedded questions** – Questions embedded within the actual graded tests -- *use Blackboard testing features.*
- **Reflection Paper** – Student critical thought feedback over a learning unit, a learning experience, a field experience, etc -- *use Blackboard journals and blogs for entries from students.*
- **Competency Checklists** – Skills and competencies checklist of ability -- *gather checklist submissions as assignments using Blackboard's assignment feature or create a quiz or test to gather student responses.*
- **Group Informal Feedback on Teaching (GIFT)** – Anonymous survey asking for 1-2 instructor actions that help students learn and 1-2 instructor actions that hinder or interfere with learning - *use Blackboard's survey tool to gather anonymous feedback from students.*
- **Self-Assessment Survey or Posting** - use Blackboard tools to *deploy a survey or create a journal where students can post responses.*
- **Student Portfolio of Work** – compilation of work, including drafts, over time to show growth and development of skills and knowledge -- *use Blackboard blogs to provide students an area to post links and attach files.*
- **Classroom Feedback** – Takes many formats; analyzing papers, tests for item analysis for research -- *use Blackboard's assignment tool to gather papers from students.*
- **Analysis of Test Items** – Certain test questions are used for faculty feedback on concepts learned -- *use Blackboard's test or survey tools.*

## Completing the Loop

Use the information gathered from students to make teaching improvements, enhancements and revisions. Actively incorporating assessment information is critical -- this is the feedback loop to improve teaching and learning!

## Evaluation

Evaluation is gathering summative results for the purpose of grading, appraising, judging, etc. Evaluation can take many forms and the more forms used within a course the better. Different types of evaluations measure different skills and abilities -- they also address different learning styles of students. In addition, evaluations should be tied to your learning objectives.

- Quizzes / Exams
- Worksheets
- Clinical Evaluations
- Papers
- Projects: Group and Individual
- Skills and Competencies/Practical Exam
- Graded Assignments of all formats

## General Education Goals at ICC

Purpose : The general education requirements of Illinois Central College prepare our graduates to become productive members of society and life-long learners. All associate degree graduates will be able to:

1. Read and think critically
2. Communicate effectively
3. Demonstrate mathematical and scientific reasoning
4. Demonstrate awareness of diversity of cultures, ethics, values and aesthetics
5. Demonstrate the ability to be creative and innovative in solving problems
6. Work independently and collaboratively
7. Demonstrate computer literacy and information literacy

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<http://icc.edu/innovation/assessment.html>

## Resources:

The Art and Craft of College Teaching: A Guide for New Professors and Graduate Students, Robert Rotenberg, Active Learning Books, Chicago, IL, 2005.

An Assessment Framework For the Community College: Measuring Student Learning and Achievement as a Means of Demonstrating Institutional Effectiveness., The League for Innovation and Question Mark, 2004. <http://www.league.org/publication/whitepapers/0804.html>

Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers, Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross, Jossey-Bass, 2nd Edition, 1993.