Centre for Teaching and Learning

The Centre for Teaching and Learning has as its mission to support and promote teaching and learning excellence, innovation, and scholarship at the University of British Columbia Okanagan.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning serves all faculties and schools at the University of British Columbia Okanagan. The Centre also provides support for graduate students/teaching assistants, post-doctoral fellows/scholars, and sessional/adjunct faculty.

Assessment for Learning

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Assessment for Learning

Assessment is present in all types of activities - not just tests - that are effective for determining the learner’s level of competence with new knowledge and skills.

Formative assessment is used to inform the instructor and the learner on their progress, and guide the learner to mastery.

Summative assessment is a conclusive judgement or evaluation of a learner’s performance relative to a standard or to other learners, often indicated with a grade.

A useful analogy is cooking. When the chef tastes the meal mid-process, it is formative assessment, but when the guests taste the meal it is summative assessment.

To select an assessment strategy, ask yourself the following:

- Does the assessment measure the learning outcomes?
- What are the criteria for competence?
- What performance scale will you use (for example, doesn’t meet, meets, exceeds)?
- Is this a formative assessment or a summative assessment?
- Is there time to prepare students for the assessment activity and do follow-up activities?

After getting the assessment results, ask yourself whether the students were prepared for this type of assessment activity and if the students understood what was asked of them.

To engage your students more in assessments,

- Give students options for the format of the assessment (e.g. written, oral, individual or group)
- Get student input on the assessment weighting, scoring criteria, and due date.

- Organize the assessment into stages such as proposal, draft, peer review, revised, and final submissions.
- Communicate your expectations early, and with details such as criteria, rubrics, weighting, and importance of the assessment.

Rubrics can save you time and improve feedback to the learner. A rubric describes various levels of competence with scores for each level. Students can also use the rubric for evaluating peers and their own work.

The feedback wording should:

- Encourage learning.
- Suggest how work can be improved.
- Be constructive and specific.
- Offer two to three strategies to incorporate in the next assessment.