

## Key Assessment Terms

- **Add-on Assessment & Embedded Assessment**
  - **Add-on assessment**: A means of gathering information about student learning that is added into the teaching/learning process (rather than a natural part of the process)
  - **Embedded**: A means of gathering information about student learning that is built into and a natural part of the teaching/learning process ([http://www.niu.edu/assessment/\\_resourc/gloss.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/assessment/_resourc/gloss.shtml)); naturally occurring assessment techniques (e.g. project-embedded assessment methods such as essays, observed behavior, student interactions, student debates) (Ewell, 2003)
- **Artifact**: A physical representation of the student learning in terms of what is being assessed; an artifact can be a paper, an exam, a presentation, a project, a portfolio with a series of documents related to a particular student's professional and/or academic development ([https://nyack.edu/files/OIA\\_04\\_LOM\\_Implementation\\_Basic\\_Foundations.pdf](https://nyack.edu/files/OIA_04_LOM_Implementation_Basic_Foundations.pdf))
- **Assessment**: The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of understanding and improving student learning and development (Palomba & Banta, 1999)
- **Assessment Plan**: A document that outlines 1) what empirical data will be collected, and by whom, for the assessment each of the learning outcomes (typically in a multi-year cycle); 2) the process for reviewing the data, policies and procedures to guide discussion and feedback of the results; and 3) the process for modifying the course, program or curriculum to improve student learning. (<http://www.csun.edu/mike-curb-arts-media-communication/assessment-terms-and-definitions>)
- **Benchmark**: A point of reference for measurement; a standard of achievement against which to evaluate or judge performance (<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/resources/definitions.htm>)
- **Closing the Loop**: A part of the assessment process when assessment results are acted upon/assessment data are turned back into program improvement (<http://www.und.nodak.edu/dept/datacol/assessment/glossary>)
- **Direct & Indirect Measures of Assessment**
  - **Direct Measures of Assessment**: Collecting data/evidence on students' actual behaviors or products (<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/resources/definitions.htm>) Examples include:
    - Student work scored with a rubric (e.g., capstone experiences, papers, portfolios, performances, etc.)
    - Some tests and exams (assuming they measure the outcome)
      - Assessment and grades are not usually the same thing
  - **Indirect Measures of Assessment**: Gathering information about student learning by looking at indicators of learning other than student work output. This assessment approach is intended to find out about the quality of the program/learning process by getting feedback from the student or other persons who may provide relevant information (<http://wp.missouristate.edu/assessment/3122.htm>). Indirect evidence is based on opinions or perceptions. Examples include:
    - Surveys/questionnaires
    - Interviews
    - Focus groups
    - Course grades (without a rubric)
    - Placement rates
    - Alumni surveys
    - Satisfaction surveys (student, alumni, employer, etc.)
    - Honors, awards, scholarships, publications
    - Anything that captures students' perceptions of learning or the program being assessed (need assessments, preferences, opinions)
      - Attendance is not usually a measurement used for assessment

- **Evaluation:** There is some confusion between the terms *assessment* and *evaluation*, as these terms seem to be used interchangeably by some authors. However, the two terms are not synonymous. Evaluation is a judgment regarding the quality or worth of the assessment results. This judgment is based upon multiple sources of information, which may include assessment results. The evaluative process goes beyond just collecting information; evaluation is concerned with describing effectiveness, satisfaction, and/or making judgments about worth or merit. (<http://www.ncsu.edu/sciencejunction/route/professional/Assessment/assess.html#two>)
- **Formative & Summative**
  - **Formative:** Refers to in-process assessments of student comprehension, learning needs, and progress during a program, course, or experience. The general goal of formative assessment is to collect detailed information that can be used to improve instruction and student learning *while it's happening*. What makes an assessment “formative” is not the design of a test, technique, or self-evaluation, per se, but the way it is used—i.e., to inform in-process teaching and learning modifications. (<http://edglossary.org/formative-assessment/>)
  - **Summative:** (sometimes referred to as outcomes assessment) Refers to the process for measuring the overall level of student learning at the end of a course, program, or experience for the purpose of assessing the student’s knowledge, skills and values. (<http://www.csun.edu/mike-curb-arts-media-communication/assessment-terms-and-definitions>) Summative assessment is used for improvement and provides information/feedback that sums up the teaching/learning process. ([https://www.azwestern.edu/learning\\_services/instruction/assessment/resources/downloads/formative%20and\\_summative\\_assessment.pdf](https://www.azwestern.edu/learning_services/instruction/assessment/resources/downloads/formative%20and_summative_assessment.pdf))

\*\*Formative assessments are *for* learning, while summative assessments are *of* learning. Or as assessment expert Paul Black put it, “When the cook tastes the soup, that’s formative assessment. When the customer tastes the soup; that’s summative assessment.” (<http://edglossary.org/formative-assessment/>)
- **Qualitative & Quantitative**
  - Qualitative Methods: Ways of collecting information that are concerned with understanding or conveying meanings or contexts, rather than making statistical inferences. Qualitative methods result in data in the form of words (not numerical in nature). Common forms of qualitative data collection methods include participant observations focus groups and in-depth interviews. (<http://www.csun.edu/mike-curb-arts-media-communication/assessment-terms-and-definitions>)
  - Quantitative Methods: Way of collecting information that allows for data to be represented numerically; quantitative data collection methods typically focus on counting occurrences or measuring characteristics or behaviors rather than meanings. Common forms of quantitative data collection methods include surveys, experiments, questionnaires, scales, and tests. (<http://www.csun.edu/mike-curb-arts-media-communication/assessment-terms-and-definitions>)
- **Outcomes** (i.e., learning outcomes, program outcomes, student outcomes, etc.): Clear, concise statements that describe how students can demonstrate their mastery of program goals. Often the terms "objective" and "outcome" are used interchangeably. (<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/resources/definitions.htm>); can be cognitive (e.g., general skills/knowledge), affective (e.g., attitudes, feelings, emotions, or values), or psychomotor (e.g., specific to discreet physical functions, reflex actions and interpretive movements)
- **Value-Added:** The assessment of learning that has been gained as a result of participating in a learning experience. It can also mean the increase in learning that occurs during a course, program, or educational experience. Requires a baseline measurement for comparison. (<http://www.csun.edu/mike-curb-arts-media-communication/assessment-terms-and-definitions>)