

**MODULE SEVEN:** This module we will briefly take you through ePortfolios.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Activity post and Participation post

**TERMINOLOGY:**

- **Assessment:** examining data against expected outcomes (below, we apply these terms to student assessment, but some may also be useful in programmatic evaluation)
  - **Direct assessment** – measuring the quality of student learning based on their performance
  - **Formative Assessment** – "assessment that is specifically intended to provide feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning" (Sadler, 1998, qtd. in Nicol and Milligan, 2006, p. 65)
  - **Indirect assessment** – measuring the quality of student learning based on how they opine on survey questions
  - **Self Assessment** - a formative-assessment process by which students assess their own work against general guidelines or a specific rubric provided by their instructor prior to any summative assessment on the instructor's part; this can be done prior to or following a peer review process. Self-assessment involves students "both in identifying the standards/criteria that apply to their work and in making judgements [sic] about how their work relates to these standards" (Boud, 1986 and 2000, qtd. in Nicol and Milligan, 2006, p. 66).
  - **Summative assessment** – measurement of student performance at the conclusion of a learning experience
  - **Transactive assessment** – a formative process of assessment that measures the quality of student learning based on their interactions through the course materials with the course professor and one another, often done in conjunction with self assessment [William Myers' use of the term "constructive assessment" adequately conveys this concept.]
  - **Transmissive assessment** – often a summative process of assessment that measures the quality of student learning based on their ability to respond to information received from the instructor and the course texts
- **Evaluation – an equivocal term even when used separately from assessment**
  - **Definition 1:** determining the value of a given program for achieving its stated goals
  - **Definition 2:** assigning a grade to student work
- **Capstone** - a summative assessment and/or evaluation method usually completed at the end of a student's program of study but can be deployed as early as the beginning or middle (e.g., an ePortfolio, comprehensive exam preparation, or thesis development)
- **Keystone** – any of a series of assessments assigned at various points within a program of study meant to collectively determine programmatic effectiveness and/or a given student's capacity within a program of study
- **Criteria** – pre-determined performance indicators
- **Rubric** – measurement guide containing a set of performance indicators
- **Self-Study** – the process by which institutions engage in a comprehensive review of their teaching and learning environment for the dual purpose of satisfying their accreditation agency(ies) during a comprehensive visit and strengthening programmatic effectiveness
- **ePortfolios** - collections of student work in an online environment manipulable by both the student and his or her advisors for the purpose of student assessment and programmatic evaluation

**READINGS:**

- [ATS Online Assessment Resources – Assessment Basics](#)

- [How to assess student participation in an online course](#)
- ATS Online Self-Study Workshop -<http://www.ats.edu/Accrediting/SelfStudy/Pages/overview.aspx>
- ATS Revised Technology Standards – (adopted June 2010 at the Presidents/Rectors Biennial Conference in Montreal) - <http://www.kenrickparish.com/nts/atstechstandards.pdf>
- ATS Guidelines for Evaluating Theological Learning - <http://www.ats.edu/Accrediting/Documents/Handbook/HandbookSection8.pdf>
- What are ePortfolios? <http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/postings/762.html>
- “Since the mid-90s, the term ePortfolio has been used to describe collections of student work at a Web site.” Visit this link: <http://www.danwilton.com/eportfolios/>
- Development and use of student electronic portfolios <http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/postings/568.html>
- <http://www.uvm.edu/~jmorris/ePortquest/ePortfoliointro.html> ePortfolios as samples
- <http://www.kenrickparish.com/ws2010> - Graduate Research & Writing Seminar Portfolio at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary
- One useful e-portfolio site is LiveText, located at <http://www.livetext.com>

### COMMENTARY/LECTURE:

As late as the 1980s, assessment was focused on the presence of institutional resources – whether enough books of the right kind were available in the library, whether enough professors of sufficient diversity to make a viable faculty were available for teaching and research, and whether a sufficient budget was available to keep the school running – but by 1996, according to Bill Miller, Director of Accreditation and Institutional Evaluation at the Association of Theological Schools, "a greater emphasis [was placed] on *analysis* of the data and decision-making within the institution" (italics his). In any reaccreditation recommendation, Miller adds, the Commissioners "want to know whether the school understands what is happening. What is quality in a school? What [does a school] need to sustain and nurture it? What will [a school] do and how do[es it] know when [it's] successful in doing what [it] do[es]?" (See the [Online Self-Study Workshop hosted by ATS.](#))

An answer lies in outcomes-based assessment, for *we measure what we value*. If our primary product is an educated student, then his or her performance outcomes become the "product" upon which we can ground an understanding of our program's quality. Programmatic evaluation, therefore, is substantively tied to student assessment.

### Differences & similarities among the terms "assessing" and "evaluating":

Assessment is the "systematic, on-going, iterative process of monitoring learning in order to determine what we are doing well and what we must improve." Assessment involves "observing, describing, collecting, recording, scoring, and interpreting information." Assessment is effective when it "is student centered ...congruent with instructional objectives ...relevant ...comprehensive ...clear (in purpose, directions, expectations) ...objective and fair, ...simulates "end" behavior/ product/ performance, ...incites active responses, ...shows progress/development over time." <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu>

What's the difference between assessment and evaluation? "The term assessment refers to the systematic gathering of information about component parts of the thing to be evaluated. The evaluation process is broader than assessment and involves examining information about many components of the thing being evaluated and making judgments about its worth and effectiveness." *From* <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu>

"What's the difference between assessment and grading? When teachers assess student performance, they're not placing value or judgment on it — that's evaluating or grading. They're simply reporting a student's profile of achievement." From: <http://teacher.scholastic.com>

"42.7% of all statistics are made up on the spot." From the comedy of Steven Wright

### **Why assess?**

Educators know how to assess and know that assessing is important – but educators may not realize that if they were to improve their assessing skills, their teaching potential would also improve, which will help their students become better learners and thinkers. According to Frederikson and Collins, "Assessment should not simply monitor achievement or report scores. Whether we are assessing to report to others or for ourselves, ...assessment should lead to instructional action."

<http://www.eduplace.com>

One method to improve teacher assessing skills is to use technology to assess (i.e. use Excel to create a grade book, Word to create a quiz, a website to create a rubric). The technology is readily available and can help predict results and increase both student interest in learning and teacher interest in teaching. Technology can lessen the burden of test giving, test taking, and grading, and it may offer new and imaginative ways to measure student performance. (See the [2010 Revised ATS General Accreditation Standards](#) regarding the integration of appropriate technologies in theological teaching and learning.)

### **Assessment is changing!**

As Bill Miller noted above, assessment changed from resource-based assessment to outcomes-based assessment by the mid-90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Now that we're in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we can look back over the past decade and a half and see that outcomes-based assessment itself has undergone change – we are no longer as concerned with what a student knows about a given course of study as we are with how that student is able to practically apply it.

A call for this shift in concern was sounded as early as 1998 by, among others, Norton and Wiburg when they wrote in *Teaching with Technology* that "[a]ssessment strategies need to shift from the assessment of a student's knowledge about a subject to an assessment of a student's ability to reason, think critically, and solve problems." What they were really calling for was an applications-based assessment process derived not from gauging the student's ability to process data transmitted from the instructor but from the capacity of the student to apply that data in a meaningful way. The pursuit of demonstrations of such applications evolved in online teaching and learning into transaction-based activities that engaged students and instructors through the materials made available to them. The new teaching was, therefore, transactive rather than transmissive in nature, so the new assessment model had to also become transactive.

In transmissive teaching and learning environments, assessment was considered to transpire after instruction, usually in the form of tests over lecture notes, course readings, and class discussions. In transactive teaching and learning environments, assessment is formative and an important part of lesson planning and implementation. Transactive assessment cannot be delayed; instead, activities and projects that demonstrate desired outcomes and measure skills and knowledge, should be included from the start.

Under a transactive assessment model, students are not only co-producers of their own teaching and learning environments, but they also become co-assessors of their own outcomes. When students have a say in their own assessment they take ownership, perform better, develop pride in what they do, and become better communicators who will get in the habit of reflecting upon their own work. Students are

more likely to meet the conditions for favorable completion of an assignment if they have a hand in developing the criteria **for** that assignment. Self-assessment helps students become focused learners who are able to think about what they have learned, question what is and isn't clear, and think critically to evaluate their work, which leads to students who become self-directed and active learners instead of passive listeners.

## **Grading as an Evaluatory Method**

A transactive assessment model does not mean that students grade themselves. Grading is a form of evaluation meted out by the instructor based on a student's ability to respond against a given set of criteria provided in advance in the form of a grading rubric. Grades, furthermore, may reveal things that assist in transactive assessment, but they do not substitute for the process of transactive assessment. Among the things that grades may reveal are whether the content is presented properly, whether the lectures are relevant, whether the test material is applicable, and/or whether students are doing more than memorizing. In online teaching and learning environments, grading ought to be considered during all aspects of a lesson – such as its goals, objectives, planning stages, and method(s) of delivery – and in all aspects of course planning – such as textbook selection, lecture material, activities, projects, assignments, planning stages, and method(s) of delivery.

The grading process should, therefore, be ongoing as a factor of lesson and course evaluation, not just as a final product. (An example would be in the development of a research project – instead of simply assigning a grade to the final product on its due date, teachers can create incremental due dates factoring grades for various peer-reviewable components of the project. John Paul Heil and Anne Marie Kitz of Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis accomplished something like this in their joint web-based exegetical research projects from fall 2002 to spring 2006. See <http://www.kenrickparish.com/cba>.) Educators will be assured that what they are doing is working and know when and what adjustments need to be made for future classes if grading is included in all aspects of a lesson.

- For fun, take one or more of the surveys below (helpful to determine student tech experience)
  - [http://www.improvelearning.com/text/prof\\_dev/self\\_assess/self\\_assess\\_mod\\_css.html](http://www.improvelearning.com/text/prof_dev/self_assess/self_assess_mod_css.html)
  - <http://www.tcet.unt.edu/START/assess/tools.htm> several links for self-assessing

## **Technology assessment tools and strategies (teacher created / student created)**

Assessment situations might include the following:

- Instructors or students are asked to evaluate another instructor or student (peer review)
- Students are asked to complete an assessment project as an assignment, i.e. create a rubric
- Self-assessment or self-reflection by instructor for the instructor, or by students for themselves, or by students for their instructor, i.e. use word processing to journal or log
- Students might be asked to assess peers and create a method to do so
- Students might be asked by their instructor to create a form to assess their own work
- Students or teacher might want to assess a technology tool or software using technology
- Instructors might even want to create a method to assess a method of assessment

## **The Seven Principles of Good Feedback Practice** (Nicol and Milligan, 2006)

Good feedback practice

1. 'helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, expected standards)'
2. 'facilitates the development of reflection and self-assessment in learning'

3. 'delivers high-quality information to students about their learning'
4. 'encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning'
5. 'encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem'
6. 'provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance'
7. 'provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape the teaching'

## Self-Assessing

Self-assessment is meaningful for students endeavoring to develop competencies in the production and dissemination of their own work, yet the skill has to be cultivated through encouragement and instruction. An assumption that precedes any effort of an instructor to assist students in the development of self-assessment strategies is that students are capable of doing so competently. We have to make this assumption in their favor if we expect them to one day be able to operate their own ministries without teacher supervision, and it is better they learn such strategies under our supervision than otherwise.

The entire weight of Malcolm Knowles's writings on andragogy and adult learning also fall into play here. Knowles makes the following assumptions in *The Adult Learner* (6<sup>th</sup> edition):

1. The learner's need to know -- the learner has a practical necessity
2. The learner's self-concept -- the learner has a sense of his or her own presence in the world and is very self-aware
3. The learner's prior experiences -- the learner brings to the learning environment a wealth of life experiences that may facilitate his or her learning
4. The learner's readiness to learn -- the learner that approaches a subject on his or her own has a certain readiness to learn
5. The learner's orientation to learning -- the learner has developed a particular proclivity toward learning
6. The learner's motivation -- the learner has an intrinsic motivation

If we accept these assumptions, then we have to also give our students an opportunity to build on them.

## The Four Steps of the Student Learning Assessment Loop by William R. Myers (p. 20)

1. **questioning**: "What are some ways learning is occurring for you in regard to both your learning objectives and the learning outcomes or objectives of this course of study?"
2. **gathering data**: "Can we bring together widely scattered data into files or portfolios that provide evidence of your learning as you fulfill the expected outcomes?"
3. **interpreting/proposing**: "When wrestled with, do such data yield understanding as to your strengths, weaknesses, and growing edges as well as allow us to make good proposals toward clarifying your personal learning trajectory?"
4. **strategic choices/implementations**: "And, does your trajectory of learning have specific occasions when serious consideration is focused on you in light of program learning outcomes, and can deliberate decisions be reached that help you in your educational journey?"

## Grading Rubrics

Grading rubrics, introduced in Module 4, are quick ways to show students what they are doing or not doing within a given assignment. Each rubric is tailored to the specific activity for which it is used. Below are two grading rubrics – the first was created for a discussion board prompt asking faculty to identify one activity in which they engage in transmissive evaluation and explain how they might change their evaluation method into one that is transactive while the second is specific to peer responses on a discussion board.

Short Activity Assessment Rubric:

CATEGORY	1	2	3
Matching activity to transmissive assessment method	neither the activity nor the method to assess is clear from the description provided	either the activity or the method to assess is clearly stated, but not both	both the activity and the method to assess are clearly stated
Matching activity to transactive assessment method	neither the activity nor the method to assess is clear from the description provided	either the activity or the method to assess is clearly stated, but not both	both the activity and the method to assess are clearly stated
contrast	no real explanation of the difference between the transmissive and transactive methods is provided	the explanation of the difference between the transmissive and transactive methods is unclear	the explanation of the difference between the transmissive and transactive methods is clear
Total Points			

Student Response Assessment Rubric:

CATEGORY	1	2	3
Student responses	Response added nothing new, such as simply agreeing with the original posting	Response added something new by way of parallel information or personal experience, but it did not indicate a clear understanding of the expressed viewpoint/summary	Response advanced the conversation, added parallel information or personal experience, and indicated a clear understanding of the expressed viewpoint/summary
Total points			

## ePortfolios

Portfolios are collections of student work over time (within a given course or across a number of courses within a given program of study). Each portfolio is a demonstration of student accomplishment in responding (more narrowly) to the course goals and (more broadly) to the program goals. In essence, the portfolio is hard evidence of the student's contribution to and experience of a given course or program

and is considered a direct means of programmatic assessment. (For a detailed description of the values and norms inherent in the use of portfolios, see Truman State 's Portfolio Assessment program at <http://assessment.truman.edu/components/portfolio/> While a portfolio provides meaningful data concerning a student's growth within a program, then, it is really geared to assess the teaching and learning environment within which that student has been formed.

The ePortfolio differs from the text-based portfolio in a couple of significant ways - one, in the way it is generated, and, two, in the way it is distributed. In the first case, the ePortfolio is developed on a web page, which enables it to take advantage of appropriate use of multimedia in the packaging of course content. Students can provide audio or video reflections on those areas of their work that they selected as representative of their experience within a course or program in light of the course or program goals they have to prove they have addressed. In addition to providing links to the work they upload to their sites, students may also provide interpretive contexts for external links to various entities online that supported their work. In the second case, the ePortfolio is universally accessible to those responsible for its review, and this includes a student's peers and a program's review board. The semi-public nature of the ePortfolio increases student attentiveness to its development as a self-evaluation designed to be used as an institutional assessment tool.

When we ask our students to develop ePortfolios, we are actually asking them to do two things - the first is to demonstrate a facility with the various technologies necessary to post materials online, and the second is to collate examples of their learning that evidence their responsiveness to the course (and, ultimately, program) goals. At the beginning of a given course (or program), then, students have to be told that this portfolio will be a portion of their course (or program) requirement and that it will merely entail the gathering and packaging of evidence specific to the course goals. Students will pay much more attention to their course goals (and their relation to the program goals) if they have this in mind, and they'll actually be the ones collecting much of the assessment data for the instructor (or dean) to use within the context of course or institutional assessment. Students will also develop a stronger understanding of the relevance of any given course to the overall program in which they're involved and of the overall program to the vocation for which they're studying.

### **ASSIGNMENTS: Use the Module 7 discussion post –**

1) Search for a scholarly article that deals with transactive assessment (even if it doesn't use that terminology) and provide a short summary of it (100-200 words). Respond to a colleague's summary concerning the use-value of his or her article to your own teaching and learning environment (50 words)

2) Think of when you might want to use ePortfolios in an online class and give details: when, where, what would students do, what would you do, i.e.?

*This concludes module seven. Thank you and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email. Mary*