Mindfulness in the Learning Environment: Empowering Faculty and Students through Formative Feedback

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What is assessment?

- The complex <u>process</u> that uses specific <u>tools and procedures</u> aimed at identifying the impact of school programs and curricula on students' learning in <u>cognitive, affective, and psychomotor</u> terms (Boboc, Nordgren, and Harper, 2009).

What is assessment?

- Complex process by which <u>outcomes of student learning</u> are established, <u>learning opportunities </u>are created, <u>evidence of student learning </u>is collected and analyzed, leading to <u>improvements in curriculum, teaching, learning, and/or assessment </u>(Suskie, 2004)

What is evaluation?

- Part of the assessment process, it implies placing a value on (or determining the "worth" of) an example of student work or performance against certain criteria

- It connects **expected** learning outcomes with **actual** ones

What is measurement?

- Use of rules to quantify student achievement, traits, attributes, or behavior

What is a test/assignment?

- Formal procedure requiring students to complete a set of tasks designed to represent a sample of their content-specific knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions

Why Do We Even Assess?

- <u>Feedback to instructors</u> – improve teaching

- <u>Feedback to students</u> – promote growth and development

- <u>Accountability requirements</u> (student learning outcomes assessment as well as academic program review) – modify curricula and/or pedagogy

Preamble

- Cycle of instruction:
  - *Content-based* = one class, one unit, etc.
  - *Time-based* = one week, one semester, etc.
- When do we determine what students learn?
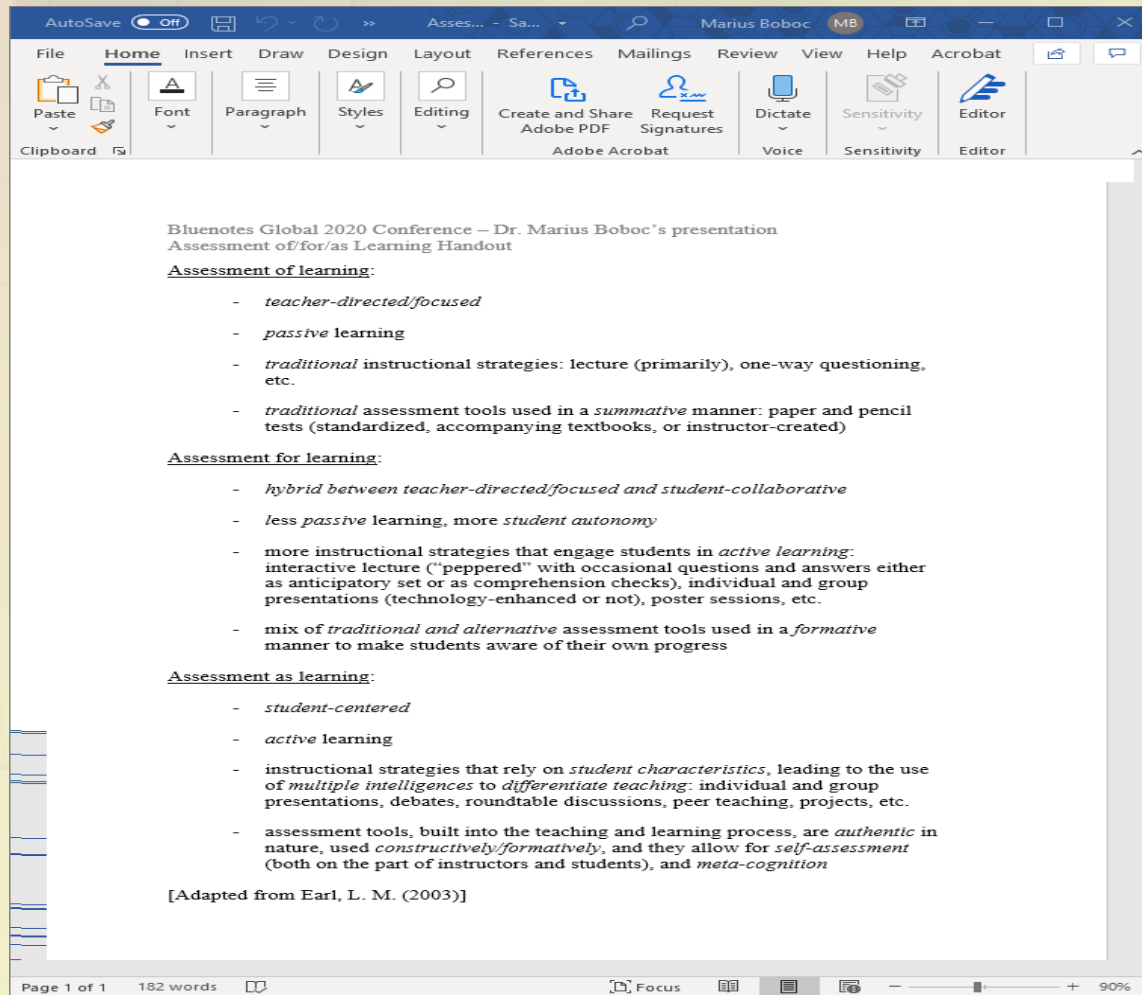 - Before; during; after; and in between (classes or units/chapters).

Conceptual Framework

- *Preliminary/placement/diagnostic assessment* (prior to instruction)
- *Pre-assessment* (before the actual class starts)
- *Formative assessment* (during class)
- *Summative assessment* (toward the end of class)
- *Preliminary/placement/diagnostic assessment* (in between the current class and the one to follow)

Conceptual Framework

- Assessment of learning
- Assessment for learning
- Assessment as learning

Assessment of/for/as Learning

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Assessment of/for/as Learning Handout

Assessment of learning:

- *teacher-directed/focused*

- *passive* learning

- *traditional* instructional strategies: lecture (primarily), one-way questioning, etc.

- *traditional* assessment tools used in a *summative* manner: paper and pencil tests (standardized, accompanying textbooks, or instructor-created)

Assessment for learning:

- *hybrid between teacher-directed/focused and student-collaborative*

- *less passive* learning, more *student autonomy*

- more instructional strategies that engage students in *active learning*: interactive lecture ("peppered" with occasional questions and answers either as anticipatory set or as comprehension checks), individual and group presentations (technology-enhanced or not), poster sessions, etc.

- mix of *traditional and alternative* assessment tools used in a *formative* manner to make students aware of their own progress
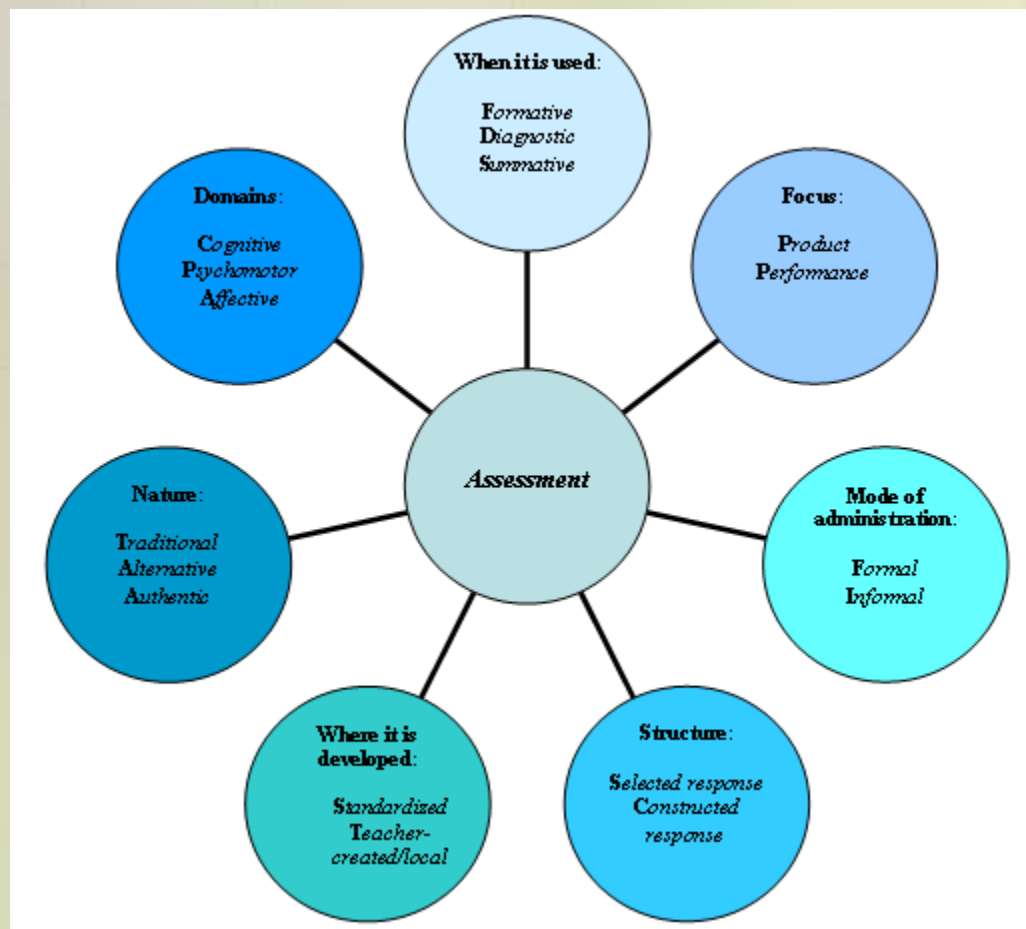
Assessment as learning:

- *student-centered*

- *active* learning

- instructional strategies that rely on *student characteristics*, leading to the use of *multiple intelligences* to *differentiate teaching*: individual and group presentations, debates, roundtable discussions, peer teaching, projects, etc.

- assessment tools, built into the teaching and learning process, are *authentic* in nature, used *constructively/formatively*, and they allow for *self-assessment* (both on the part of instructors and students), and *meta-cognition*

[Adapted from Earl, L. M. (2003)]

Types of Assessment Tools

(see next slide)

Samples

- Let's zoom in on some samples of assessment tools

Pre-Assessment Tools

- *Food for Thought*
- *Hook Question/Statement/Problem*

Pre-Assessment Tool Samples

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Assessment Tools Samples Handout 1

Pre-Assessment Tool Samples:

1. *Food for Thought* (posted on the board or a poster on the wall, visible to all students)

- An opening/anticipatory question	What do we know about the demise of the Mayan civilization?
- A quotation to interpret	*Festina lente* – Can we do it in the 21st century?
- A problem to solve (mathematical, ethical, etc.)	A loved one is very sick; the only way in which this person is going to survive is by taking a medicine that can be found at a local pharmacy. It is late at night and the pharmacy is closed. Would you break in to get the medicine? Support your answer with solid arguments.

2. *Hook Question/Statement/Problem* (posted on the board or a poster on the wall, visible to all students)

This pre-assessment tool is supposed to work as the previous example, but in this case, students are directly involved in generating the question/statement/problem, based on what they think the content of the class is going to be about. The question/statement/problem could also rely on homework previously assigned in preparation for the upcoming lesson.

VARIATION: The *Hook Question/Statement/Problem* could be developed by students at the end of class (as summative assessment); in this case, the tool in question would be used with a different group of students, as an example of student involvement in the creation of teaching materials.
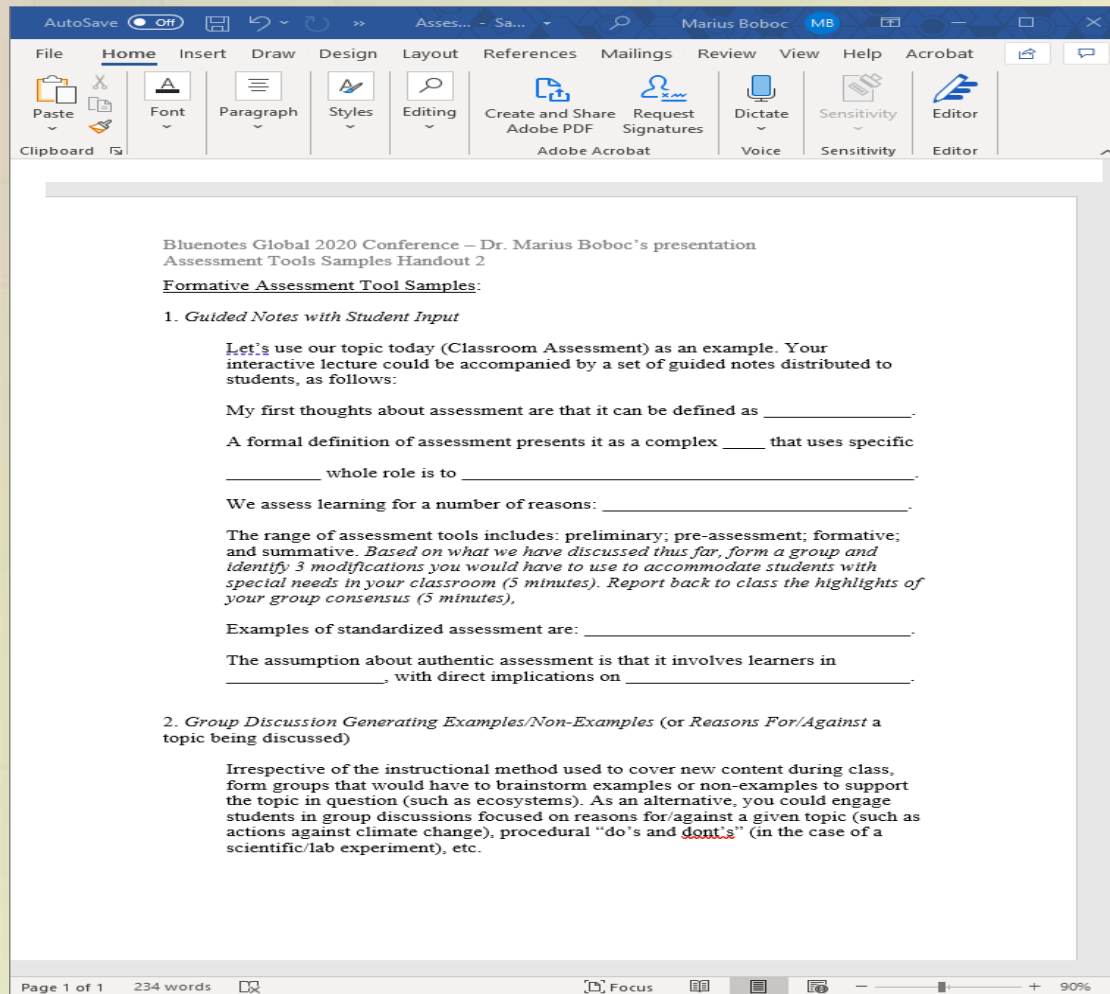
Formative Assessment Tools

- *Guided Notes with Student Input*
- *Group Discussion Generating Examples/Non-Examples*

Formative Assessment Tool Samples

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Assessment Tools Samples Handout 2

Formative Assessment Tool Samples:

1. *Guided Notes with Student Input*

Let's use our topic today (Classroom Assessment) as an example. Your interactive lecture could be accompanied by a set of guided notes distributed to students, as follows:

My first thoughts about assessment are that it can be defined as _____.

A formal definition of assessment presents it as a complex _____ that uses specific

_____ whole role is to _____.

We assess learning for a number of reasons: _____.

The range of assessment tools includes: preliminary; pre-assessment; formative; and summative. *Based on what we have discussed thus far, form a group and identify 3 modifications you would have to use to accommodate students with special needs in your classroom (5 minutes). Report back to class the highlights of your group consensus (5 minutes),*

Examples of standardized assessment are: _____.

The assumption about authentic assessment is that it involves learners in _____, with direct implications on _____.

2. *Group Discussion Generating Examples/Non-Examples* (or *Reasons For/Against* a topic being discussed)

Irrespective of the instructional method used to cover new content during class, form groups that would have to brainstorm examples or non-examples to support the topic in question (such as ecosystems). As an alternative, you could engage students in group discussions focused on reasons for/against a given topic (such as actions against climate change), procedural "do's and dont's" (in the case of a scientific/lab experiment), etc.

Summative Assessment Tools

- *Stump the Instructor*
- *What Does This Mean to Me?*

Summative Assessment Tool Samples

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Assessment Tools Samples Handout 3

Summative Assessment Tool Samples:

1. *Stump the Instructor*

   Once new content has been introduced/discussed, ask students to form groups in which to review the topic(s) of the class, based on which they could come up with a question for the instructor. Each question gets listed on the board, after which the instructor can choose one (or more, if time permits). In case the instructor does not know the answer, there should we some reward system for the students who came up with a difficult AND relevant question.

2. *What Does This Mean to Me (as a future engineer, teacher, social worker, etc.)?*

   At the end of class, engage students in a discussion about the various ways in which the new content relates to their professional lives as engineers, teachers, or social workers (depending on their area of study).

   VARIATIONS: a) the group discussions could focus on the implications of the new content on their communities, society at large, or world.

                           b) the group discussions could identify connections between the new content of today's class and topics covered previously (whenever this retrospective approach is possible)

Peer- and Self-Assessment Tool Samples

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Assessment Tools Samples Handout 4

Peer- and Self-Assessment:

Focus of Assessment	Peer-Assessment	Self-Assessment	What does this mean?
Written work	X	X	Use a *scoring rubric* to evaluate the quality of the written work.
Oral presentation	X	X	Use a *scoring rubric* to evaluate the quality of the presentation.
Meta-cognitive skills		X	Use a *checklist* and/or an *observation journal* to document growth and development.
Group work	X	X	Use a *scoring rubric* as well as an *observation journal* to determine both the interpersonal, democratic, time management, and problem solving skills.

How Can I Prove Teaching Effectiveness?

Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness:

What Questions Do I Ask Myself?	What Sources of Information Do I Have?
1. Am I addressing the learning objectives of the class? Do they converge toward the goals of the whole course? Are the learning outcomes aligned with both the course goals and objectives of my sequence of classes representing the whole course?	Student papers, projects, exams evaluated based on clear criteria Student performance on standardized exams Student performance in subsequent courses (in my program)
2. Do my course materials, instructional strategies and activities reflect a student-centered pedagogy?	Peer observations of class performance and analyses of written documents
3. How do students perceive my class/teaching?	Student evaluations (both formal and anonymous, teacher-created), individual student and/or focus group interviews, alumni surveys.

Putting all these pieces together ...

- Design – implementation – evaluation (spiral model)

Obstacles

- Lack of training and/or experience
- Time
- Top-down approach to assessment in the classroom
- Relevance to instructors ("why would I change what I have used for so long?")
- Leadership and mentoring
- Support
- "Dummy down" perception

Facilitators

- Developing reflective practice in the classroom

- Getting to know one's students

- Utilizing characteristics of one's teaching context to create appropriate and relevant learning opportunities for all students

Possible outcomes

- Generate an <u>assessment map</u> that accompanies the curriculum map of one's course

- Identify the adequate <u>cadence of use of formative assessment</u> based on the instructor's knowledge and skills related to content, students, pedagogical strategies, and cognitive as well as social engagement

Possible outcomes (cont.)

- Establish a <u>peer-based support system/network</u> (such as a Teaching Council) that allows for mentoring and constructive evaluation to occur

- Use peer feedback to bridge perceptions of student progress while being collaborative and leading by example

Bibliography

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