

Adult Online Learner Assessment Techniques

Kind of Evaluation	Name	How It's Done	How to Use	Ways to Extend	Time Needs
Course Knowledge and Skills	Background Knowledge Probe	Create a quiz utilizing two or three open-ended questions, a handful of short-answer questions, or ten to twenty multiple-choice questions that will provide information regarding students' existing knowledge of course concepts or topics.	Review the quizzes and assess which areas the overall student body are weak or strong on. Let students know the results and share with them how what you learned will impact the course.	Use the same quiz at the end of the course to assess changes in student knowledge.	Medium
	Misconception/Preconception Check	Identify the common misconceptions or preconceptions that students bring to topics within your course. Select a few of these and create a short questionnaire to discover your current students' ideas and feelings within these areas. Use multiple-choice or Likert scales as appropriate. Allow for student responses to be anonymous.	Analyze the results from the questionnaire to discover where misconceptions and preconceptions currently exist within your class. Share the overall results with the students. Adjust your course to address whichever issues require attention.	Assign students to read or research in an area that will shed new light for them where a misconception previously existed. Share the research with the class.	Medium
	Muddiest Point	Ask students to submit what they felt was confusing or not explained well enough from any element within the course (you can choose one area or leave it more open-ended.)	Sort the submissions into similar responses. Provide information that helps to clear up the confusion students are feeling.	Assign different students to research and provide clarification for the class on an identified confusing point.	Low

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Course Knowledge and Skills	Pro and Con Grid	Start with an issue of value to your course. Create a prompting question or statement that will cause students to consider the pros and cons in relation to the issue. Let students know how many pros and cons are desired.	Do a frequency count of the pros and cons students have provided. Have they omitted anything you feel should have been included? Did they add anything you had not considered? Report the results to the class.	Assign students to follow up on certain pros and cons by providing research or evidence that backs their thinking.	Low to Medium
	One-Sentence Summary	Choose a topic you have recently covered within the course and ask students to summarize (who did what to whom, when, where, how, and why?). Ask them to put those facts together into a single sentence.	Examine the various facets of the sentences for accuracy by separating out the who, what, when, where, how, and why elements for review. Look for overall strengths and weaknesses in student responses.	Use this technique each week to summarize course content or a textbook's content. Then have students create a concise paragraph that describes the pertinent facts about the overall course or textbook.	Low to Medium
	Word Journal	Select a text or portion of a text on which students should focus. Ask students to choose one word that exemplifies the most important point of that text. Then have them write a paragraph or two explaining why they choose their single word.	Look for patterns within the words that are chosen and the explanations given to see how well students have extrapolated the important elements of the material.	Ask students to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of two other student posts within the forum.	Low to Medium

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Course Knowledge and Skills	Concept Maps	Choose an important, complex concept within your course. Write down the terms and short phrases related to it. Draw a concept map that shows the central concept in the middle and ways that each of the other ideas relate to it. Show this example to students and assign them to create their own creative representation of a course topic.	When analyzing, be sure to consider the elements the student has chosen to include as well as the ways they see the elements connecting. Look for unexpected and creative responses. Look for patterns in student responses. Check for areas that appear to be unclear to the class.	Ask students to write an essay explaining their concept map.	Medium to High
	Directed Paraphrasing	Choose a concept or theory that has been well covered within your course and ask students to create a paraphrase for a specific audience. The goal is to see if students can condense the material and put it into the correct vernacular for presenting to people who have not studied this theory or concept. Specify the number of words that can be used.	Circle the clearest and muddiest points in each paraphrase and look for patterns within the class.	Choose another audience and ask students to paraphrase again with the new context in mind. Have students do a peer review of two other student responses.	Low to Medium
	Applications List	Select a principle or procedure that your students are studying that has direct applications and ask them to work together to create a list of as many real world applications as possible.	Once the list is complete, review it to see if any applications are missing and which are best.	Ask students to discuss the possible consequences or ramifications of each application within the list.	Low to Medium

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Course Knowledge and Skills	Paper or Project Prospectus	Create a guideline sheet for students to complete and a rubric that provides clear expectations for a paper or project assignment. Ask students to fill in the necessary information to provide you with an understanding of the focus of their project or paper. (*Examples of the guideline sheet can be found on pages 249-250.)	Read through each prospectus and note the range of topics being covered. Look for strengths and weaknesses within each student's work. Provide feedback that guides students toward a broader range of topics or better work.	Ask students to do a peer review of two other student prospectuses.	Medium to High
	Application Article	Ask students to write a short news article about how a major point applies to a real-world situation. <i>(Technique drawn from: www.celt.istate.edu/teaching/cat.html)</i>	Post these into a discussion to allow students to review each other's work and discuss.	Ask students to write a short news article about how a major point would have applied in biblical times.	Medium
Attitudes, Values, and Self-Awareness	Content Journal	Ask students to select a passage from their course reading which was particularly meaningful to them. Then have them write a 1-2 page journal expressing why this was meaningful and any questions it raises for them.	Review the journal to examine student understand and reaction to the chosen text. Try to assess how the entire class is interacting with the text.	Assign a journal of this type for each week of the course. At the end of the course, ask students to review their previous journals and write a 1-2 page paper exploring connections or patterns in what stood out to them.	Medium to High

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Attitudes, Values, and Self-Awareness	Classroom Opinion Polls	Look for questions or issues related to your course material where student opinion may affect learning. Create one or two questions that can be answered with yes/no or Likert scale responses.	Summarize the results and share them with the class. Use the information to guide how you instruct those course elements.		Low to Medium
	Interest/Knowledge/Skills Checklists	Create two separate checklists. One that lists course topics and assesses student interest. Another that lists specific related skills and knowledge to the course topics and assesses student exposure. (*An example of these checklists is on page 287.)	Tally the items to see where student interests lie and how much related knowledge and skills are available within the class. Share with the class your findings.		Low to Medium
Reactions to Instruction	Feedback Forms	Create a three to five question feedback form on a specific class element for which you would like to know student perceptions.	Analyze student responses and share with the class. Provides insight for possible improvements to course elements.		Low
	Reading Rating Sheet	Create a simple form that allows students to assess a text or article that was assigned within the course. Make sure to include short answer questions that ask for student reasons and explanations.	Consider the student responses and assess if the text or article you are using is being rated well or poorly and how that might affect future use of this material.	Use the same basic idea to have students assess a video or audio element.	Low to Medium
	Assignment Assessments	Create a simple form that allows students to assess a class assignment based on the criterion of how affective it is in preparing them for jobs or careers.	Review responses and consider if the assignment needs to be changed to better meet student needs.		Low to Medium

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