

## Glossary of Assessment Terms

Term	Definition
<b>Assessment</b>	Assessment is the ongoing process of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing clear, measurable expected outcomes of student learning</li> <li>• Ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes</li> <li>• Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations</li> <li>• Using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning</li> </ul> (Suskie, p. 4)
<b>Authentic assessment (alternative assessment, performance assessment)</b>	Assessment is authentic when we directly examine student performance on worthy intellectual tasks.... Authentic assessments present the student with a full array of tasks that mirror the priorities and challenges found in the best instructional activities. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Benchmark</b>	A detailed description of a specific level of student performance expected of students at particular ages, grades, or development levels. Benchmarks are often represented by samples of student work. A set of benchmarks can be used as "checkpoints" to monitor progress toward meeting performance goals within and across grade levels. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Benchmarking</b>	Comparing performances of people on the same task; raters use "anchors" to score student work, usually comparing the student performance to the "anchor"; benchmarking is a common practice in the business world. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Closing the Loop/Using the Assessment Results</b>	Studying assessment findings to see what improvements might be suggested and taking the appropriate steps to make them (Banta & Blaich, 2011, p. 22).
<b>Competencies/ Objectives</b>	Basic intellectual functions. The THECB previously addressed the competencies of reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy through the 1999 Core Curriculum. However, due to the changing economy and population of Texas, the competencies were recently changed to critical thinking skills, communication skills, empirical and quantitative skills, teamwork, social responsibility, and personal responsibility. (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2011)
<b>Content standards</b>	Broadly stated expectations of what students should know and be able to do in particular subjects and (grade) levels. Content standards define for teachers, schools, students, and the community not only the expected student skills and knowledge, but what programs should teach. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Core Curriculum/general education/Texas Core Curriculum</b>	Common courses required for a degree plan irrespective of major. The THECB uses the Texas Core Curriculum as a way to create a common statewide framework for general education and to specify certain content requirements to facilitate the transfer of credit. The THECB has recently made revisions to the core curriculum including a new statement of purpose, "Through the Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and physical and natural world; develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world; and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning." The THECB has revised the six Core Curriculum objectives (see competencies/objectives definition). (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2011)
<b>Criteria</b>	Guidelines, rules, characteristics, or dimensions that are used to judge the quality of student performance. Criteria indicate what we value in student responses, products or performances. They may be holistic, analytic, general, or specific. Scoring rubrics are based on criteria and define what the criteria mean and how they are used. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)

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<b>Criterion-referenced assessment (competency-based assessment)</b>	An assessment where an individual's performance is compared to a specific learning objective or performance standard and not to the performance of other students. Criterion-referenced assessment tells us how well students are performing on specific goals or standards rather than just telling how their performance compares to a norm group of students nationally or locally. In criterion-referenced assessments, it is possible that none, or all, of the examinees will reach a particular goal or performance standard. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Critical Thinking Skills</b>	"To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2011)
<b>Communication Skills</b>	"To include effective written, oral, and visual communication" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2011).
<b>Curriculum Maps</b>	Curriculum Maps are matrices that document the alignment of course student learning outcomes to program student learning outcomes and institutional general education outcomes. These matrices provide evidence that students have an opportunity to learn program student learning outcomes and institutional general education competencies throughout the curriculum. The process of creating them helps faculty to identify gaps in the curriculum. They also help faculty to design assessments.
<b>Direct Assessment</b>	Measurement of actual student learning.
<b>Embedded Assessments</b>	"Program, general education, or institutional assessments that are embedded into course work. In other words, they are course assessments that do double duty, providing information not only on what students have learned in the course but also on their progress in achieving program or institutional goals. Because embedded assessments are typically designed locally by faculty and staff, they match up well with local learning goals. They therefore yield information that faculty and staff value and are likely to use to improve teaching and learning" (Suskie, p. 27).
<b>Empirical and Quantitative Skills</b>	"To include applications of scientific and mathematical concepts" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2011).
<b>Formative assessment</b>	Assessments undertaken while student learning is taking place rather than at the end of a course or program. Faculty and staff can use the results to improve the learning of current students by making immediate changes to classroom activities and assignments (Suskie, p. 24).
<b>High-stakes test</b>	A test used to provide results that have important, direct consequences for examinees, programs, or institutions involved in the testing. For example, MCAS (K-12) is considered a high-stakes test because children who do not pass the examination do not receive a high school diploma, regardless of their performance in other areas of their school education. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Holistic scoring</b>	Evaluating student work in which the score is based on an overall impression of student performance rather than multiple dimensions of performance (analytic scoring). (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Indirect Assessment</b>	Measurement of perceived student learning.
<b>Inter-rater reliability</b>	The consistency with which two or more judges rate the work or performance of test takers. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	"The knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students have and take with them when they successfully complete a course or program" (Suskie, p. 23).
<b>Measurement Instrument</b>	the assignment, project or task by which the faculty assesses student learning
<b>Personal Responsibility</b>	"To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2011).
<b>Portfolio assessment</b>	A portfolio is a collection of work, usually drawn from students' classroom work. A portfolio becomes a portfolio assessment when (1) the assessment purpose is

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	defined; (2) criteria or methods are made clear for determining what is put into the portfolio, by whom, and when; and (3) criteria for assessing either the collection or individual pieces of work are identified and used to make judgments about performance. Portfolios can be designed to assess student progress, effort, and/or achievement, and encourage students to reflect on their learning. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Reliability</b>	The measure of consistency for an assessment instrument. The instrument should yield similar results over time with similar populations in similar circumstances. (Hawaii Department of Education, n.d.)
<b>Rubrics</b>	Specific sets of criteria that clearly define for both student and teacher what a range of acceptable and unacceptable performance looks like. Criteria define descriptors of ability at each level of performance and assign values to each level. Levels referred to are proficiency levels which describe a continuum from excellent to unacceptable product. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Social Responsibility</b>	"To include intercultural competency, civic knowledge, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2011).
<b>Standard for Mastery</b>	The level of achievement that denotes competency; what level must a student achieve to have mastered a learning outcome.
<b>Standardized testing</b>	A test designed to be given under specified, standard conditions to obtain a sample of learner behavior that can be used to make inferences about the learner's ability. Standardized testing allows results to be compared statistically to a standard such as a norm or criteria. If the test is not administered according to the standard conditions, the results are invalid. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Summative assessment</b>	Assessments occurring at the end of a course or program. Instructional changes attributed to assessment results can only occur for subsequent courses or programs (Suskie, p. 23).
<b>Teamwork</b>	"To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2011).
<b>Triangulation</b>	A process of combining methodologies to strengthen the reliability of a design approach; when applied to alternative assessment, triangulation refers to the collection and comparison of data or information from three difference sources or perspectives. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)
<b>Validity</b>	The extent to which an assessment measures what it is supposed to measure and the extent to which inferences and actions made on the basis of test scores are appropriate and accurate. For example, if a student performs well on a reading test, how confident are we that that student is a good reader? A valid standards-based assessment is aligned with the standards intended to be measured, provides an accurate and reliable estimate of students' performance relative to the standard, and is fair. An assessment cannot be valid if it is not reliable. (System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2008)

## Sources and other useful websites for Assessment Terminology

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