

Direct and Indirect Assessment

Direct Assessment refers to any method of collecting data that requires students to demonstrate a knowledge, skill, or behavior.

Indirect Assessment refers to any method of collecting data that requires reflection on student learning, skills, or behaviors, rather than a demonstration of it.

The best assessment practices utilize both direct and indirect methods of collecting evidence of student learning in order to paint a more complete picture of student achievement and capabilities. While all of these examples listed below are geared to programmatic assessment of student achievement, the methods marked with an asterisk (*) can also be used at the course level to measure student learning.

Direct Evidence of Student Learning

Ratings of student skills by field experience supervisors
Scores and pass rates from licensure, certification exams, or other national tests
Capstone experiences (research papers, theses, presentations, etc.) scored with a rubric
Other written work, performances, or presentations scored with a rubric*
Portfolios of student work*
Scores of locally designed tests in key courses, qualifying exams, or comprehensive exams accompanied by descriptions of what the tests assess*
Score gains between entry and exit on published or local tests or writing samples*
Employer ratings of employee skills
Systematic observations of student behavior (presentations, group discussions, etc.)
Summaries or analyses of electronic discussion threads*
Classroom response systems (clickers, etc.)
Student reflections on values, attitudes, and beliefs

Indirect Evidence of Student Learning

Course grades*
Assignment grades if not accompanied by rubric/scoring guide*
Admission rates into graduate programs and subsequent graduation rates
Quality/reputation of graduate programs into which alumni are accepted
Placement rates of graduates into appropriate career positions and starting salaries
Alumni perceptions of their career responsibilities and satisfaction
Student ratings of their knowledge/skills or reflections on what they have learned*
End-of-semester evaluation questions focused on course not instructor*
Student/alumni satisfaction collected through surveys/exit interviews/focus groups
Voluntary gifts from alumni and employers
Student participation rates in faculty research, publications, and conference presentations
Honors, awards, and scholarships earned by students and alumni

Adapted from NWCCU examples provided in Linda Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*, 2nd Edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009).