

Three Tangible Ideas for Engaging Assessment Content

WHITE PAPER

OVERVIEW

Research has shown that student engagement is related to their performance in the classroom, both in terms of their overall learning as well as in the level of accomplishment on assessment tasks[1] . But how exactly can the learning environment be structured to promote engagement?

INTRODUCTION

Since it's known that many students are assessment-driven[2] , and access to online or virtual learning environments is becoming more common, learning environments are increasingly designed to incorporate low-stakes formative assessments that are integrated within the learning module and capture students' interest.

Unlike summative assessments that occur at the end of a course or year and are often used for high-stakes decisions, e.g., determining pass or fail, formative assessments serve as an ongoing (even daily) check-in that can provide students timely feedback as to how they are progressing along the learning path.

Below we provide three tangible ideas to help you create the type of e-assessment content that is likely to resonate with students, while driving them towards higher levels of learning.

1. Bae, S., & Kokka, K. (2016). Student Engagement in Assessments: What Students and Teachers Find Engaging. Stanford, CA. Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education and Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity.
2. Holmes, Nataile: Engaging with Assessment. Increasing Student Engagement through Continuous Assessment. Active Learning in Higher Education, Vol 19, Issue 1, pp 23-34

1 USE THE SIX CONCEPTS OF ENGAGEMENT AS A FRAMEWORK 1 TO DESIGN AND DEVELOP YOUR ITEMS AND ASSESSMENTS

1. Relevance Relevant assessment items tap into the prior experience or interests of the student population. For example, relevant items leverage something that the student is likely to be familiar with, e.g., a mathematics task related to the number of concert tickets likely to be sold at various price points.

2. Authenticity Authentic assessment items are based on real-world data and situations, not make-believe. For example, rather than referencing life on an imaginary planet, have students look at data on heart rate changes in Olympic track athletes. 3. Autonomy.

3. Autonomy When using this concept, the assessment design would allow each student a choice of question(s) to answer. For example, students could be presented with three open-ended writing prompts, and asked to choose one to respond to. In this example, the element of choice, along with there being no "right answer" allows students to engage in an assessment activity within their own area(s) of interest.

4. Collaboration Many students report that they like to collaborate or socialize during their learning, and certainly the opportunity to learn from or get feedback from a peer is often motivating. In the learning environment, a collaborative task that allows for virtual or in-person discussion or provides a team with a problem-solving activity can be used to familiarize students with a concept or strategy that at a later time can be assessed independently.

5. Higher Order Thinking is assessed by items that require students to do much more than simply regurgitate facts. These item types often have multiple parts which engage students in varying ways. Ideally, they are designed with several entry points to allow students of varying abilities to experience success on at least part of the task. For example, tasks can be designed that require students to synthesize a given set of information, apply some data to a new problem, draw conclusions, and/or explain their thinking.

6. Self-Assessments can engage students by allowing them to see for themselves if they did something right—and giving them an opportunity to rethink and change their response if need be.

These items typically are designed with immediate feedback, and can also provide a hint or a reminder of a formula or rule that assists the student in trying another approach to solving the problem.

2 GAIN FAMILIARITY WITH THE RANGE OF TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED ITEMS (TEIS) 2 AND TOOLS THAT SIMPLIFY THE ITEM-AUTHORING PROCESS.

Think beyond multiple-choice. E-assessment software provides many opportunities for you to move beyond the limitations of traditional items types. Better yet, they allow for a wide range of TEI types to be created by all item writers, not simply those who possess a high level of programming skill.

Moreover, the availability of open source assessment solutions, including item-authoring software built on open standards (QTI, APIP) facilitates access to an extensive set of TEI templates as well as the ability to deliver or import newly-developed items into your existing standards-compliant assessment platforms.

TEIs that feature single response interaction, e.g., drag-and-drop the names of countries onto a world map) or text entry (look at the map above, and explain how to get from the main entrance of the mall to the performing arts center) to complex items with multiple interactions (or parts) in a single item (Portable Custom Interaction or PCIs), can be created from readily-available tools designed to make the development task a breeze.

3 GAIN FAMILIARITY WITH THE RANGE OF TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED ITEMS (TEIS) 2 AND TOOLS THAT SIMPLIFY THE ITEM-AUTHORING PROCESS.

For example, the French Ministry of Education (Direction de l'évaluation de la prospective et de la performance [DEPP]) has developed and released a number of model interactive items using the PCI standard. These multi-step scenario items engage students in a real-world situation in a visually appealing way. For example, one their showcase items in science assesses knowledge and skills related to the Relativity of Movement. In this task-based scenario, students are able to engage and interact with several on-screen characters to view a situation from each character's perspective. For a look at what is possible, check out how the French Ministry of Education leverages Portable Custom Interactions to foster the link between teaching and learning.

It goes without saying that technology-enhanced assessment items (TEIs) are expanding the possibilities for the creation of engaging assessment content. With the addition of just your imagination to available software tools, it can really be quite simple to create the kind of content that inspires your students to greater engagement and success.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM TAO



ABOUT OAT

TAO, from Open Assessment Technologies, is the leading digital assessment solution for education and career advancement. Modular, customizable and interoperable by design, TAO empowers you to break free from the confines of proprietary silos, eliminate expensive licensing fees, take full control of your testing resources

PRODUCT

ACCELERATING INNOVATION IN DIGITAL ASSESSMENT

Three TAO editions, one powerful platform. Download our product sheet to learn more about TAO's digital assessment platform solutions for assessment authoring, delivery, rostering and reporting and find the product tier that's right for your organization.



CASE STUDIES

- **Transitioning an Item Bank from Paper to Digital with The Finnish Matriculation Examination Board (MEB)**
- **TAO Addresses the Unique Assessment Needs of Students with Cognitive Disabilities**
- **Beyond Multiple Choice: UMass Enriches Adult Proficiency Tests with Engaging Interactions Types Using TAO**
- **The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministry of Education (EDK) Uses TAO to Ensure Consistent Nationwide Learning Standards**
- **New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Adds Technology and Multimedia to Language Proficiency Exams**
- **The Comenius Program in Europe Uses TAO to Deliver Self-Assessment Surveys to At-Risk Youth**
- **Elsevier Incorporates TAO with Ease, Gauging Career Readiness in Healthcare Fields**



WHITE PAPERS

- **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS): Opening the Possibilities for Deeper Learning and Assessment**
- **Redefining Digital Assessment**
- **The Importance of IMS Certification and QTI Compliance**
- **The Practical Guide to Successful Large-Scale Online Assessment**
- **Three Tangible Ideas for Engaging Assessment Content**

eBOOKS

- **The Practical Guide to Digital Assessment**