Assessment Strategies for Online Learning: Engagement and Authenticity

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What is the book about?

For many learners, assessment conjures up visions of red pens scrawling percentages in the top right-hand corner of exams and feelings of stress, inadequacy, and failure. Although learners sometimes respond negatively to evaluation, assessments have provided educational institutions with important information about learning outcomes and the quality of education for many decades. But how accurate are these data and have they informed practice or been fully incorporated into the learning cycle?

We think that the potential inherent in online learning environments to alter and improve assessment and evaluation has yet to be explored by educators and learners; therefore we looked at assessment that engages and authentically evaluates learning.

We are sure that online and distance learning environments afford educators new opportunities to embrace the most effective face-to-face assessment methods and to realize the potential of engaged learning in the digital age.

In short…

Assessment has always been a contentious area of teaching and learning.

Assessment is a critical part of the learning cycle – not an add-on.

Online assessment is not fully realized.

The transition to online learning has not taken advantage of the medium.

We can fix this!

Is this book "different?"

Yes, we think so.

What the book is NOT about:

- How to build tests or exams
- How to measure reliability, validity, scoring, etc.

Rather, we are....

- guided by constructivist theory,
- concerned with depth and breadth of assessment approaches,
- interested in underlying philosophies of teaching and learning
- focused on the humanities and social sciences,
- committed to principles of adult learning, and
- convinced of the value of authenticity and engagement in online learning and assessment.

The Big Picture: A Framework for Assessment in Online Learning

The Contribution of Adult Education Principles to Online Learning and Assessment

What Do You Believe? The Importance of Beliefs about Teaching and Learning in Online Assessment

Authenticity and Engagement: The Question of Quality in Assessment

Assessment Using E-Portfolios, Journals, Projects, and Group Work

The Age of "Open": Alternative Assessments, Flexible Learning, Badges, and Accreditation

Planning an Assessment and Evaluation Strategy—Authentically

Flexible, Flipped, and Blended: Technology and New Possibilities in Learning and Assessment

A Few Words on Self-Assessment

Summing Up

Appendix ● Other Voices: Reflections from the Field

Themes

Assessment is an important part of the cycle of learning, which also includes outcomes (what?), strategies (how?), and content. It is an integral part of the planning process and must coalesce with all other aspects of the intended learning experience, whether in terms of course or program.

Themes

Educators must know and understand their own philosophical stance on teaching and learning in order to choose materials, activities, and assessment in a coherent manner.

Assessment activities and processes will reflect educators' values.

Themes

Authentic assessment presents learners with opportunities to make connections with prior knowledge and to build relationships between their own learning and real-life situations. Authentic assessment is ill-defined and permits learners to engage with open-ended tasks that sustain learning and the learning cycle.

Themes

Online learning provides fertile ground for the creation of authentic assessment and evaluative activities and should be appreciated for its affordances and used to its full capacity.

Themes

Advancing technology opens more doors for authentic assessment and can include social media tools that can be used in conjunction with traditional assessment vehicles, such as essays and reports, but can also be used independently.

Journals, group work, projects, portfolios, peer-assessment, and self-assessment all provide opportunities for online authentic assessment.

There was more to say!
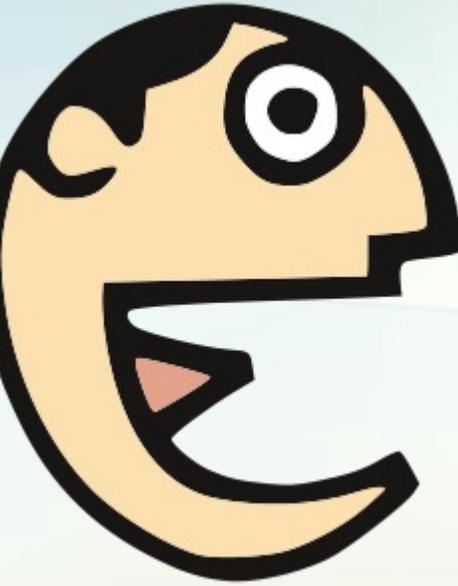
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"...the 'age of open,' wherever you stand on it, will continue to evoke more disruption to traditional ways and create more excitement and opportunity" (p. 161).
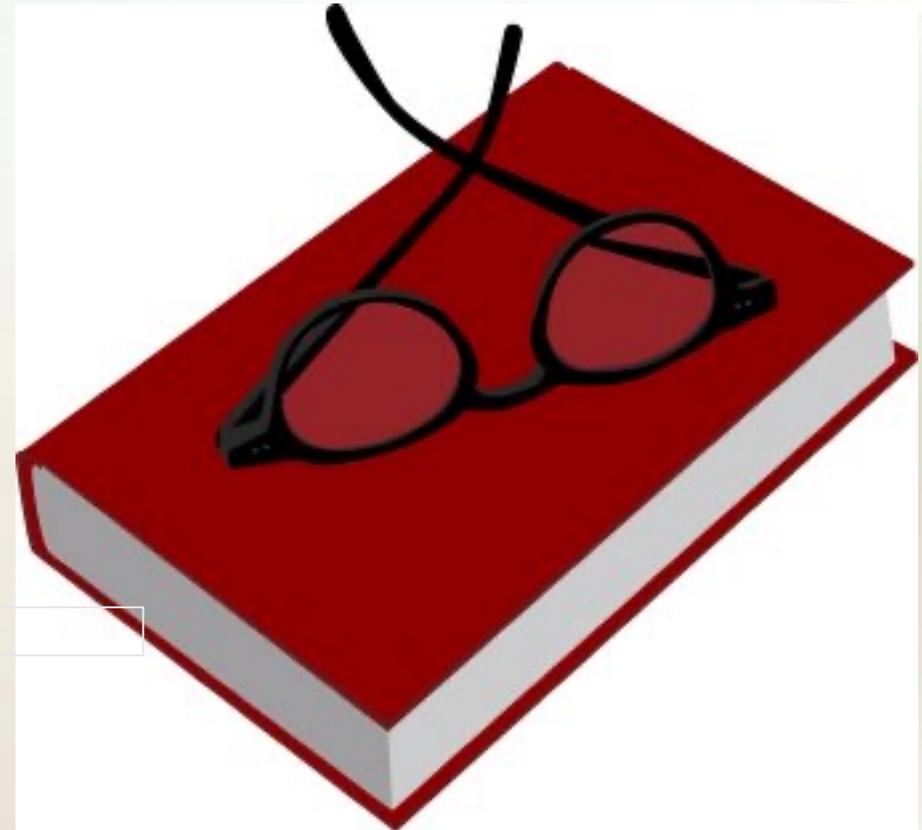
Reflections upon writing a book....

Why write a book?

Learning from writing

Afterwards

Thank you, Dan. Thank you, CIDER.

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