

Different Assessment Types

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Assessments are how we assess a learner's mastery of a Learning Objective (LO). An assessment asks the learner to demonstrate their understanding of the LO through a specific task, such as answering a question or selecting the correct piece of information. There are many different types of assessments that can be utilized in McGraw Hill Education's LearnSmart platform, and each has specific benefits for use.

Different types of assessments engage different types of learners. For example, some learners are very comfortable with the traditional Multiple Choice Question (MCQ), while others find more interactive assessments to be a better tool for demonstrating their understanding. Providing assessments in a variety of formats leverages the available diversity in order to better assess a learner's mastery of the content. It allows learners who perform better with a particular type of assessment to leverage that strength to more effectively demonstrate their understanding, rather than relying only on traditional T/F and MCQ assessments. Additionally, utilizing a variety of assessment types creates an engaging assessment environment that requires more active participation from the learner, which improves learner engagement and retention.

Below are some of the most common assessment types, along with some information about how they can be leveraged optimally to provide a diverse assessment experience for learners.

Multiple Choice Question (MCQ)/Multi Answer

MCQs and MultiAnswer are some of the most traditional assessment formats. They can be very simple to write, since they consist of a question stem and several choices for the learner to choose an answer from. MCQ's have one correct answer and several distractors, while a Multi Answer has several correct answers as well as distractors. These assessments are generally a very familiar format for learners, but are also susceptible to guessing, since there is a finite number of options. It is fine to use MCQs and Multi Answers, but they should be supplemented with other types of assessments to avoid learner fatigue.

Fill in the Blank (FIB)

FIBs are sometimes more challenging, since they require the learner to generate the correct answer to fill in the blank. This is much more difficult than recognizing the correct answer from a list of distractors. While the tool does have some spelling tolerance, it is possible to know the correct answer and still be marked wrong because of spelling inaccuracies. FIBs are great for learners to take more ownership of their own learning, since they cannot guess the correct answer.

Rank

A ranking assessment requires learners to place several items in a sequential order. These assessments are only applicable to information that lends itself to sequential ordering. For example, the learner may be asked to place events in chronological order, or to sort several responses from most appropriate to least appropriate. It is essential to be very clear about which end of the sequence should go at the top, to avoid a learner being marked wrong for accidentally putting elements in the reverse order. Ranking assessments require a demonstration of understanding at a deeper level than MCQs and Multi-Answers.

Matching

Matching assessments ask the learner to match things from the right column with the corresponding element in the left column. This sort of assessment is very effective for getting at nuances or small variation between similar concepts, as they can be listed in the same visual space, so the learner can focus on the details that differentiate. It can also be a useful assessment type for covering many vocabulary words in a subject area.

Categorize

Categorize assessments are excellent practice at distinguishing elements that belong in two or three different categories. There is usually a nice synergy between Categorize and Multi Answer, so this makes it easy to create two different types of questions using nearly the same assessment stem. Consider the following examples:

Both assessments target the same information, have a similar assessment stem, and identical answers and distractors, but the leverage different styles of assessment. The traditional and familiar aspects of the Multi Answer will appeal to some types of learners, while the interactive element of the categorize will appeal to other types of learners.

Multi-assessment

A Multi-assessment is essentially an assessment with several parts to it. The designer sets up a scenario with information that will remain the same for all parts of the assessment. Then they add several individual assessments that reference that scenario. These additional assessments will be presented one at a time, while the background information remains the same. This is a useful tool when you want the learner to have repeated practice with the same concept, want to evaluate several aspects of a concept, or want to assess several layers of a concept, in a sequential way. The individual assessments can be any of the other types of assessments (MCQ, MultiAnswer, FillBlank, etc.). These assessments allow incredible flexibility and focus in how the learner's mastery of a concept is assessed.

