



Identify Summative Assessment and Assignment Types Aligned to the Cognitive Level of Outcomes and Objectives

Summative assessments and assignments are those evaluations intended to establish records or grades that represent students' ability to demonstrate mastery of the set outcomes or objectives (Nilson, 2016). To make sure there is alignment between the evaluations and course outcomes or objectives, create evaluations that ask students to demonstrate the same level of thinking in both (Miller, 2014).

A Process for Identifying Well-Aligned Summative Assessments and Assignments

Step One: Identify the cognitive level of your outcome or objective.

This can be done most easily by locating the action verb in your course outcome or objective using a chart titled "Types of Assessments and Assignments by Cognitive Level," which you can view or download from the Implementation Resources page.

In instances where the action verb appears in more than one cognitive level on the chart, you will need to consider the specific intent of that outcome or objective. For example, the verb "describe" appears in both the Remember and Understand cognitive levels. To determine which level to use in order to identify the appropriate assessment or assignment type, ask yourself if you want students to recall a description that has been shared with them previously. If that is the case, then the outcome would be classified at the cognitive level Remember because you are simply asking students to recall a description. However, if you want students to create a new description, they would have to have an understanding of the concept to formulate a description; therefore this outcome would be classified at the Understand cognitive level.

Step Two: Select an assessment or assignment type that aligns with the outcome or objective cognitive level.

Using the same chart, review the examples of assessment and assignment types associated with the cognitive level you identified in step one and select the type that best represents the content and skills you are assessing and best meets the needs of your students.

Step Three: Ensure that your students are appropriately prepared for success.

Once you have created an aligned assignment or assessment, or if you are using an existing resource, take steps to ensure that you have effectively prepared students to meet with success on the assignment or assessment by considering the following questions:

1. Have I provided opportunities for students to engage with the content they will need to successfully complete the assessment or assignment?
2. Have students had opportunities to practice the skills they will need to successfully complete the task?
3. Do formative assessments indicate that students are ready to tackle the summative assessment or assignment?

Sources

Miller, M. D. (2014). *Minds online: Teaching effectively with technology*. Harvard University Press.

Nilson, L. B. (2016). *Teaching at its best: A research-based resource for college instructors* (4th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.