**Reviewing taught content and assessment**

**Why do we asses?**

Drawing on what we previously learned on curriculum work, assessment work occurs at many levels and for various reasons. Wakeford (1999, p. 42) argues that “The assessment of students’ learning is a not well understood” and teachers may feel that their work energy is being stolen by various pedagogical demands one of which includes learning assessment. We address assessment and reviewing taught content from three levels: the macro-level; the meso-level; and, the micro-level. We feel that approaching the issue of assessment from multiple levels serves to illustrate that assessments are not solely the measurement of learning outcomes, even if they are often portrayed as such. Behind the actual learning assessments there is a network of activities and motives that entangle students, teachers, universities, administrators, regional education priorities, and even global academic relationships and partnerships - A tangled web of academic politics and various interests.

Thus, there are several macro-level forces shaping the structures of learning assessment and what is seen as central or not. We will draw out some of the topics complexities in these regards in order to give context for learning assessment. First, various accreditation processes are an engine of quality education assurance. The Aalto University School of Business has been accredited by all three major international organizations that certify business schools (AACSB, AMBA, EQUIS), and the University heralds this achievement as “a ‘triple-crown’ accreditation possessed by only 55 other universities in the world” on its website. Thus, it is important to note that the quality assurance teams who audit schools on behalf of accreditation organizations make clear that they regard assessment as a central component when evaluating the level of teaching and learning (Wakeford 1999). Second, international partnerships with other universities require a mutual language in order to assure bridges between multi-cultural, multilingual and interconnected business school environments. Aalto proudly partners with CEMS global alliance of academic and corporate institutions that is dedicated to furnishing students with skills and know-how to thrive in the global business environment. Consistent assessment tools provide the mutual language necessary to interconnect educational goals across 30 academic institutions and 70 corporate partners in the CEMS global alliance. Third, the Aalto University School of Business is a publicly financed institution that ultimately serves the state of Finland. Therefore Aalto must provide the state a measure of quality control that it is indeed living up to its mission and in service of the public good. As such, assessments are embedded in the political structure of firstly Finland, secondly larger European Union and thirdly the entire world of academia where ranking systems and therefore universities that come out top in them play a big part in benchmarking and setting standards for assessment. In general, it is thus important to be aware that these interconnected systems and structures play a part in decisions on assessments and thus assessments include a level that goes beyond the small world of an individual teacher and their classroom.

At the meso-level, Aalto University, or any given university for that matter, needs tools and criteria with which to measure and manage the various elements of its complex organizational structure. As such, Aalto uses assessment as a school level requirement to make sure that measuring the learning outcomes is as uniform as possible between and in the different schools and departments that fit under the organizational umbrella of Aalto. The meso-level is to a certain extent always defined by the macro-level as part of Aalto’s plan is to become an international top university and that means adopting/accommodating the assessment criteria used in other top universities and recommended by the accrediting organisations. However, it is not just the accreditation organisations that define assessment and the way it is used, there are also different types of assessment that have to do with individual learning and what is viewed as best practise in this mostly universities tend to use a mix of assessment types.

The micro-level of assessment contains the practical tools used in teaching. Assessment can be either summative or formative. When thinking of assessment, the most commonly thought ways to evaluate student learning are *summative assessment* methods, also called assessment ‘of’ learning. The purpose of this type of assessment is to measure students competence by assigning grade. It is done at the end of learning process (Taras 2005). Some most commonly used summative assessment tools are for example different tests such as test at the end of chapter or book or test at the end of course, a final paper or a project. *Formative assessment*, then again, is a set of tools that teachers can use to understand what they will be teaching and to assess how well students have learned (Nicol and Macfarlane‐Dick 2006). Formative assessment is also called assessment ‘for’ learning. The main goals offormative assessment is 1) to asses audience knowledge, 2) to adjust content, teaching methods or instructions based on received feedback, 3) to monitor students’ progress in learning, and 4) to engage both teacher and students into learning activities. There are various of tools for formative assessment such as (for more information follow the link <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/Pages/tools.aspx)> :

* Self-assessment used by students to assess their progress in learning. (e.g. reflective journal, progress pass, setting personal learning targets)
* Peer Assessment for performance (e.g., Teamwork Pie Graph, numerical peer evaluation form, opponent groups)
* Exit ticket
* T-chats
* Feedback (e.g., traffic light)
* Graphic tools to visually represent the assessment progress

Social media offers formative assessment opportunities to assess students’ performance in real time (for more information follow the link https://www.edutopia.org/blog/frictionless-formative-assessment-social-media-paige-alfonzo).

. For example:

* Twitter
  + Teacher ask students to tweet the most confusing part of, for example, a transaction cost theory
  + Using class hashtags
  + Using tweet chats
* Facebook, Google Plus, and Edmodo
  + One-minute essay as a comment
  + Polling tools “How did you find today’s class? Were the concepts easy to understand?”
* Instagram
  + Post a picture of your progress in the final research project
  + “A math teacher halts a lecture, projects incomplete math theorems on the board, and then assigns a different problem to each of several small groups. The twist is that the students post a photo of their written progress to Instagram every 90 seconds so that the instructor can monitor responses in real time” [1]

**References**

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Wakeford, Richard (1999). “Principles of student assessment.” In Fry, Ketteridge, and Marshall (eds) Handbook for Teaching & Learning in Higher Education 2nd Ed. Kogan Page: London, p. 42-62.

[1] https://www.edutopia.org/blog/frictionless-formative-assessment-social-media-paige-alfonzo

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/Pages/tools.aspx