

BOOK REVIEW

Assessment Strategies for Online Learning Engagement and Authenticity

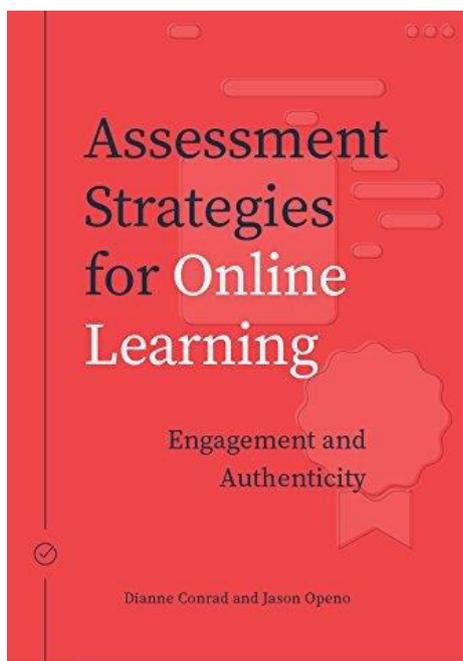
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INTRODUCTION

Assessment, evaluation and grading have been used to verbalise the result or the process of learning and teaching interchangeably. However, with the rise of the student-centered teaching paradigm, the difference in application and notion of these terms are becoming clearer. Assessment is formative and sheds light on the process while evaluation is summative and gives importance to results. The emergence of open learning makes academicians to reconsider these assessment means.

The advancement in technological means has led flexible learning tools to spread, especially online learning. Online learning's widespread acceptance requires new ways of assessments which will both show the learning efforts of learners and encourage them to deepen their learning. The approval of the Community of Inquiry Model (CoI) necessitates social, cognitive and teaching presence, which results in engagement and authenticity in assessment.

Dianne Conrad and Jason Openo are successfully able to transfer their adult education and online learning background to write about online assessment, a topic in intricacy. Conrad and Openo are trying to get a close look at the ways of assessment in online learning in high education at social science by considering constructivist outlook. The main focus of the authors are assessments requiring and producing authenticity and engagement of students. The book consists of ten chapters each of which underlines open learning and its assessment in online environment. The main emphasis of the book on assessment is to clarify the need for new assessment means and the vanity of old ways. The authors are stressing the importance of constructivist learning for engagement and authenticity in online learning assessment.

REVIEW OF THE BOOK

Chapter 1: defines what it means by uttering assessment-evaluation and combines the rise of online learning with the need of authentic assessments by adding that open and distance learning tends to go through and requires new assessments. Then they define the theoretical structure of ODL by mentioning Keegan, Moore, Medemeyer, Peters, Holmberg and Knowles.

In chapter 2: in order to shed light on the connection between online learning and adult education, Conrad and Openo first date the roots of adult education back to the lyceums of the US in 1800s, Chautauqua in 1870s and the agricultural extension efforts. Then, they express the principles of adult learning and the development of online learning to demonstrate their blood bond.

Having detailed philosophical orientations to teaching and learning (liberalism, progressivism, behaviourism, humanism, radicalism, cognitivism and constructivism), **chapter 3:** underlines the importance of reflection in learning and defines constructivism and connectivism as philosophies capable of explaining online learning and assessment.

Chapter 4: defines authentic assessment as a holistic approach to determine a learner's learning process. According to the authors, authentic assessment should be of real world, ill-structured and a product of higher order thinking skills. They name e-portfolios, reflective exercises, peer assessment, collaborative projects, self-evaluation and semantic mapping as authentic assessment tools. Community of Inquiry is seen as the main model behind the emergence of authentic assessment. Then, learning outcomes and rubrics are counted to be the essential tools for authentic assessments.

In **chapter 5:** Conrad and Openo claim that e-portfolios, journals, projects and group work are the most suitable tools for authentic online assessments. They assert that e-portfolios have a holistic look which requires the instructors to consider all aspects and developments of the learner. Moreover, e-portfolios indicate the recognition of prior learning (RPL). For them, learning journals enable learners to reflect on what they have learnt and it is a good tool for self-assessment.

Chapter 6: explains what "the age of open" has brought to the learning and assessment. It tells of alternative assessments, flexible learnings, badges and accreditation. It underlines the development and leading characteristics of MOOCs, OER and Open Access Journals in Open and Distance Learning. Conrad and Openo stress the fact that ODL requires authentic assessment.

Chapter 7: is about planning an authentic assessment and evaluation online strategy by considering constructivism and connectivism. Outcomes, strategy and the actual assessment of the course are the steps to be followed.

Conrad and Openo, in **chapter 8:** shed lights on the new possibilities and assessments derived from technological advancement: Flexible, flipped and blended learning. Blended learning take advantage of "internet to do things that cannot be done in person." Clickers, wikis and blogs are commonly used tools that enable blended learning. The flipped classroom consists of out of classroom preparations and in the flipped classroom activities which strength the learners' learning abilities.

Chapter 9: claims that self-assessment is one of the authentic, formative and constructivist means of assessment which leads to deep learning. But it also tells about the negative side of this tool if the learner doesn't apply it properly.

Conrad and Openo, in **chapter 10:** envisage the unavoidable rise of online learning and express the need for constructivist -authentic online assessment means such as journal, group work, project, e-portfolios, peer-assessment, and self-assessment.

The appendix part of the book is about "other voices" on the alternative assessments from the field around the world.

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Abdulvahap SONMEZ is currently a PhD student in Open and Distance Learning Department at Anadolu University. He took his master degree in Postcolonial Literature and he is a graduate of English Language and Literature. His research interests cover mobile learning, culture of ODL and alienation.

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