An Incomplete List of Assessment Tools

Assessment tools are methods for collecting data on student learning. They can be split into two types of tools or measures. Direct measures are assessment tools that measure student learning by having students create or perform a task directly based on their learning. Indirect measures infer whether learning has taken place by asking for perception of learning, typically from students, but also from those with whom they have worked.

Direct measures: direct evaluation of aggregate student achievement on specific learning objectives (e.g., "as a whole, students have learned X at this level")

Embedded in regular course assignments:
• standardized exams (nationally normed, proficiency, licensing, etc.)
• embedded test questions (aligned to specific learning goals)
  ◊ multiple choice
  ◊ short answer
  ◊ essay
• portfolios (graded with a rubric*)
• writing assignments (graded with a rubric)
• lab reports (graded with a rubric)
• checklists of requisite skills
• minute papers/muddiest point (other graded or non-graded classroom assessment techniques)
• pre/post testing - ask specific test questions at the beginning and end of the semester (or before and after you teach a specific topic)

Authentic assessment of real tasks:
• oral presentations (graded with a rubric)
• group projects (graded with a rubric)
• performances (musical, theater, etc.)
• posters
• capstone experience
• oral defense or exam
• videotapes of student skills performance

*Rubrics allow instructors to share their criteria easily with colleagues and multiple graders to rate work on comparable scales.

Indirect measures: tools that allow you infer actual student achievement, very often from student self-report of their perception of their learning

- surveys (current students, alumni, etc.)
  - ◊ these may include SEI, self-evaluation of learning, recall of learning experience after some time
- exit interviews
- focus groups
- journaling (reflective or other types)
- interviews
- alumni database
- library usage
- Carmen usage data

Rubric Resources

For those who may not be familiar with rubrics, here are a few websites with sample rubrics and directions for building them:

- http://www.flaguide.org/cat/rubrics/rubrics7.php
- http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/assess/rubrics.html
- http://ctl.byu.edu/single-article/developing-functional-rubrics
- http://www.iuk.edu/academics/ctla/assessment/resources/resources_rubrics/index.shtml

Making the Grading Process Useful for Program Assessment

To use the grading process for assessment, one must:
1. Ensure that the classroom exam or assignment actually measures the learning goals
2. State explicitly in writing the criteria for evaluating student work in sufficient detail to identify students' strengths and weaknesses (rubrics are very useful for this)

Excerpted from: Walvoord, B. (2004). Assessment Clear and Simple. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.