

Semester III

Unit IV

Topic - Assignment as an assessment device

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Assignments as Assessment Tools

Assignments are given to students to assess their ability in the field of study and their knowledge of the subject. Assignments are designed by professors in a way that students can understand exactly what is expected of them. The following are details on how professors design assignments:

Design of an Assignment-

- The main objective of an assignment is to evaluate whether the subject matter is understood by the students.
- Depending on a content and curriculum of the subject for the semesters, teachers often give assignments on key objectives and teaching goals of the curriculum. Assignments help assess the writing skills, cognitive understanding level, and presentation skills of the students.
- Group assignments are great assessment tools as they analyze whether the students can work together on a project and whether they understand what is being taught in class.
- An assignment is designed in a way that makes it very clear to students as to what is expected from them. Assignments have various subsections in them. A well-designed assignment gives the word count and marks distribution for every section of the assignment.
- Marks are given based on structured criteria and each section is assigned marks. This means that there is a standard evaluation process and every student is assessed, fairly based on the criteria for giving marks.
- Usually, there is a standard rubric for marking an assignment which is used to create an assignment. Sometimes customized rubrics are used for assignments where the evaluation criteria are changed slightly depending on the nature of the assignment and subject.

Basic Rules for Creating an Assignment-

If the assignment is not created in a proper way, students will not benefit from the work. Assignments are a method of assessment of a student's ability in the subject. If the students get bad assignments which don't make them think and explore the subject, then the assessment of the ability of the students in that subject will be compromised. There are some Do's and Don'ts that tutors need to follow while making an assignment. They are as follows:

- The most important aspect of designing an assignment is clearly defining the guidelines. The teachers should give clear instructions of exactly what is expected in the assignments.
- Assignments are generally framed in the form of questions on a topic. The topic questions should be open-ended and not close-ended. Close-ended questions limit the thinking of a student and this is not beneficial for the student's ability to learn from the assignment.
- Assignments are an assessment tool for the grade but they are also ways in which students learn. Professors generally give students helpful links and reference pages to the students. An understanding of the subject is taught to the students before they do the assignment. Assignments, however, should not have one ideal answer.
- Assignments assess the ability of students to think. Tutors must judge an assignment on its merit and not by matching it to a model answer sheet created in advance.
- For an assignment to be successful the tutor must match the word count with the topic of the question in the assignment. This means that if the word count is limited and the subject matter is extensive, students will not be able to do justice to the assignment.
- Generally, a template or a model of the assignment is given to the students with the assignment. This decides the structure of the assignment and helps students to do assignments in a predetermined structure.
- Clear guidelines also mean simple and easy to follow concise guidelines. If an assignment has pages worth of guidelines, it becomes a tedious process and students can get confused. The focus of the student shifts from the subject, to actually following each and every guideline. Assignments are assessment tools for understanding whether students understand the subject. Too many guidelines are always in the way of learning.
- Criteria for evaluation, word count, marks assigned, and clear instructions of the expectations from an assignment will help students submit quality assignments.

Assignments as Assessment Tools-

As mentioned above, assignments are created as a part of the overall grade for the semester. Assignments are part of the coursework and have a percentage of the grade based on them. Assignments are designed in such a way that the evaluators asks questions or give a topic on which students have to use their understanding of the subject to put on paper exactly what they have understood of the subject. This is a great way to

assess the progress of a student in a subject during the course of a semester. Universities all over the world assess students based on these criteria and assignments in high ranking universities are always tougher than most universities.

Teachers and professors give a mix of standardized assignments and innovative assignments to their students in a bid to challenge the thinking of students. Students learn how to work with each other in group assignments and this helps them work well in the future with colleagues at their workplace. Only exams cannot give a detailed evaluation of a student. This is because some students are better than the other in writing exams in pressure environments. Assignments give students a relaxed way in earning a grade and many students who are not good at writing exams in pressure environments can earn a percentage of their grade by submitting quality assignments and showcasing their knowledge of the subject.