

## A BASIC SURVEY OF ONLINE ASSESSMENT FOR TEACHING JAPANESE

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**Abstract:** This workshop demonstrates the basic principles and techniques for setting up, constructing, and managing online quizzes, tests, and peer or self assessments. The presenter suggests criteria for choosing software and Internet tools to accomplish student assessment and provides guidelines for making online assessment an effective, integrated component of instruction. Moodle is offered as an ideal online assessment and learning management tool.

**Keywords:** assessment, online, software, testing, evaluation, Moodle

Effective and meaningful evaluation and assessment tools can be helpful in meeting teaching goals for student language mastery. Addressing their uses requires a broad view of evaluation and a wider useful range of assessment types and functions (Table 1). Careful consideration of the features of the various online tools for assessment in blended (regular and e-learning instruction) evaluation practices is essential for success.

Table 1 Comprehensive View of Evaluation as an Integral and Integrated Component

What are the Purposes and Parameters of Assessment	
Target	Who is targeted? Individual, Peer, Group, Teacher, Institution
Logistical	What are the stages, processes, stakeholders?
Referential	Comparison with whom, whose and what standards?
Cumulative	Is building mastery the goal?
Summative	Do you need benchmark assessments?
Formative	High stakes or interim decision-making?
Experiential	Not just paper and pencil. Include atypical mode?
Reflective	How will the results help learners develop?
Qualitative or quantitative	What is the nature of the resulting data and its analysis
Systematic, Random Predictive	Is all I do just test and assess? Setting priorities and managing them is important.
Holistic	How do we balance learners' needs with performance criteria?
Systemic	How do we evaluate the TOTAL evaluation system?

If commercial online courseware and software learning packages are too constraining, limited assessment features, inadequate in content or just too expensive, don't be afraid to do-it-yourself. Briefly, online assessment tools are available in five major types: 1) HTML forms and web page editors, 2) Stand-alone software or web applications for testing, 3) Server Applications, 4) LMS: Learning Management Systems, and 5) Comprehensive Authoring Systems. After briefly highlighting examples of each, Moodle, a learning management system is the main focus because of its complete range of assessment features.

### THE ADVANTAGES OF MOODLE AS A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL

While several Web-based assessment tools are introduced, the workshop focuses primarily on the assessment features of Moodle, a learning management system (LMS) which is particularly well-suited for foreign language teaching. Moodle is an increasingly popular

LMS for schools and colleges, which rivals Blackboard and WebCT in features and suitability for Japanese language instruction. Not only is it free Open Source software, but it is based on a social constructivist theory of instruction. There is a simple to use test-making module within it for creating powerful online tests that include use of media files, multiple question formats, and both simple and sophisticated grading functions. In addition, Hot Potatoes quizzes and exercises can be incorporated directly into Moodle. Further, it has some in-built modules making it superior for self and peer assessments of student work or performances. It allows for flexible incorporation of teacher evaluation, self-assessment, and peer assessment in determining grades. The Workshop module of Moodle provides a tool for student submission of written work or recorded performances (audio or video files), but scores can also be assigned for many online tasks, such participation in an online discussion. The type of assessment and the evaluation criteria can also be designed by the teacher. One disadvantage is that Moodle is only a server side application. Fortunately, however, it is becoming widely popular and is relatively easy to install and maintain and is also being offered by third-party web hosting services at a very reasonable cost

#### CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN E-LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- A. Interactivity is a two-edged sword.
- B. Increasing learner efficacy demands an increase in teacher effort and vice-versa.
- C. Establishing a new classroom culture (common sets of values, attitudes and habits) is a necessary requisite and a by-product of e-learning.
- D. Understanding and sharing solutions the positive and negative repercussion of e-learning is valuable.
- E. Students need and actually want structure but will resist being controlled through manipulation or coercion.
- F. Don't expect all students to enjoy the closer scrutiny and increased proximity to that e-learning sometimes brings.
- G. Not all of your colleagues will understand or appreciate your enthusiastic proselytizing about e-learning and online assessment.

#### PITFALLS AND PROVISOS FOR IMPLEMENTING ONLINE ASSESSMENT

There are some pitfalls to consider in adding increasingly sophisticated procedures and activities to your online repertoire.

1. It is very likely that you'll be working long hours at some point, but it will be worth it.
2. The volume of work expands disproportionately to the amount of time you spend in making work for others.
3. Balance the content mastery testing with process assessment in online and blending teaching. Use self, group and peer assessment to help cut down workload volume and increase learner development and commitment.
4. Online communication can be absorbing and alter your levels of intolerance for perceived ineffective quality of communication e-competence or loss of respect for those still developing styles of effective communication (online or not).
5. What can go wrong sometimes does. So you'll feel a whole lot less anxious by being prepared for the worst and the best. Plan a back-up system in case things go awry.