

## **An Educators' Toolkit for Teaching-Learning Assessment in Journalism and Mass Communication Education**

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### **Abstract**

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*This article objective is to promote an understanding and the power of formative assessment and its impact in strengthening student learning outcomes and the instructional process, and also share some formative techniques voluntarily compliant to journalism and mass communication settings. This article discussed key components of classroom assessment techniques, summative and formative assessment and the distinction between formative and summative assessment. The article discussed formative assessment strategies used to evaluate student learning in classroom, assessment of learning outcomes standard required for institutions or units seeking accreditation from ACEJMC, assessment of faculty teaching, teaching-learning assessment in journalism and mass communication. The article encourage educators to use formative assessment in teaching-learning and presents an argument on student teaching evaluation and peer review evaluation. In conclusion, the author recommended and emphasized the significance of fashioning a culture of assessment to develop student's ability to achieve the course outcomes and educator's ability to become an effective educator in journalism and mass communication classroom.*

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**Keywords:** *Assessment, Formative and Summative, Educator and Student improvement, Journalism and mass communication and Teaching-Learning Process*

### **Introduction**

The 2013 revision of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) assessment of learning outcomes recognizes that each institution has its unique situation, cultural, social or religious context, mission and resources, and judges programs against the objectives sets for preparing students for professional careers in journalism and mass communications graduates capable of achieving specific educational outcomes (Brown et al., 2012). Presently journalism and mass communications education prepares students to work in a diverse global and domestic society, competency-based, knowledge and value, focusing on the achievement of learning outcomes, rather than just completion of requirements.

This approach to education addresses what the learners are expected to be able to do at the completion of their education, rather than what they are expected to learn during their education. Brown et al., (2012) noted that evolutionary changes may evolve in professional practice, audience's information, seeking behavior, and communication technology. But assessment of student learning is different from these evolutionary changes because assessment is a focused and deliberate process to understand if the students are learning what the teacher expects them to learn and to improve the quality of the program (Brown et al., 2012).

Whether the unit is utilizing the ACEJMC outcomes or school-specific curricular outcomes, educational goals, ACEJMC assessment plan components (Brown et al., 2012) in terms of measurable abilities, graduates should possess, represent the knowledge that reflects ACEJMC competencies and values required to be successful in professional careers such as journalism and mass communications.

These values and competency-based education require an acknowledgement of what the course or teacher will seek to do (teaching) and what a student should know or be able to do (learning) they are not synonymous, therefore educators are tasked with the responsibility to ensure the control of the learning environment and evaluate the progress of students toward achieving the learning outcomes. To achieve these tasks, educators must utilize a variety of assessment measures in the classroom, including formative and summative evaluations.

Educators need to select assessment procedures that consider students' cultural traits in assessing journalism and mass communication students. Assessment instruments are designed to discover what students grasp so that educators can exploit learners' strengths (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2006). In interpreting assessment results, educators understand that performance assessment depends on backgrounds and experiences of the learner (Dogini, 2015). Incongruous assessment procedures have posed problem and overrepresentation of students in journalism and mass communication education programs (Klingner et al., 2005; Linan-Thompson & Ortiz, 2009; Ortiz & Artiles, 2010). However, the analysis of practices within journalism and mass communication assessment is limited. ACEJMC learning assessment outcome practices calls for educators to choose assessment instrument and procedures appropriate to validate the programs (Brown et al., 2012). Also, to acknowledge the impact of classroom instruction, educator's bias, performance assessments, assessment procedures and to understand that learning in journalism and mass communication education is exhibited by continuum performance assessment rather than just knowledge, skills and prior experience (Dogini, 2015; Gay, 2013; Klingner et al., 2005).

Formative assessment has a powerful influence on learning outcomes and development of the educator (Angelo & Cross, 1993). For this article, the target audience are educators in journalism and mass communication education. The objective of this article is for educators in journalism and mass communications to practice, understand, and appreciate formative assessment.

Formative assessment plays an important role in improving student learning outcomes and instructional process (Angelo & Cross, 1993), as well as educates the educators on formative techniques voluntarily adaptable to journalism and mass communication education courses. Educators in journalism and mass communication in different departments such as public relations, speech communication, radio, television, film or studio production, can employ formative assessment activities described in this article to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes.

Also, educators in journalism and mass communication can use summative assessments to determine the degree of students' achievement at the end of the course. Formative assessment reveals the progress of learning-teaching outcomes during the course. The author of this article trusted on his expertise, knowledge of relevant literature and comprehensive literature evaluation in preparing this article. This article examines educators' toolkit for teaching-learning assessment in journalism and mass communication education, assessment measures, assessment learning outcomes in journalism and mass communication, learning assessment techniques, classroom assessment techniques and concepts of learning assessment method. This article concluded with the recommendation of how journalism and mass communication instructors should develop a means of measuring student's background, attitudes, behaviors, emotions, and personalities in higher education to improve teaching and learning (Dogini, 2015).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical underpinning for this research was based on constructivism (Piagets, 1970, Dogini, 2012, Caldwell, 2009). Piagets' developmental theories incorporated nature of knowledge and skill, and how students gradually acquires it, construct it and use it (Ormrod, 2008). Constructivists believe that teaching and learning is an active, social process, in which student's construct meaning of their world with the support and understanding of their educators (Driscoll, 2005; Ormrod, 2008). Constructivism allows students to discover how learning occurs in the classroom and allows educator to determine how to teach in their courses. The constructivist theory of learning asserts that knowledge and skill develops through action and reflection (Driscoll, 2005). Constructivist theory argue that knowledge and skills are not something that already exists, but something that each student, through incorporation of new information into the existing information, creates on their own (Medrano, 2005; Dogini, 2012). Constructivists suggest that although the student constructs all knowledge, it is also influenced by the student's external relationships with their environment (Dewey, 1952).

These perspectives that students construct knowledge, place the lead for directing learning directly in the hands of the student (Ormrod, 2008).

The way individuals gain skill, knowledge and interpersonal aptitudes are the focus of individualism (Ormrod, 2008). This thought is grounded in the study of individual needs and interests. Theoretical perspectives identified in literature on journalism and mass communication, there are barriers and hurdles to learning from students and educators perspective. The conflicting notion becomes dauntingly complex and complicated processes, that the study of theory of education has prompted educators to be concerned and adopt formative assessment to ascertain that the students are learning (Dogini, 2012, 2015, 2016). Assessment facilitates a new way of teaching-learning (Ormrod, 2008). According to Vygotsky (1978) collaborative activities and social interaction such as formative assessment are important in teaching-learning. From a constructivist perspective, teaching-learning is a process in which new knowledge and skill are constructed or built based upon current and past knowledge or experience (Ormrod, 2008)

### **Defining Assessment**

Assessment is the process by which an instructor determines the degree to which his goals and objectives are being achieved. Assessment is the act of describing learners' performance, primarily for the purpose of enhancing learning. The purpose of developing assessment for students in journalism and mass communication courses in higher education is to determine how well these students are learning. Angelo & Cross (1993) stated that classroom assessment helps college instructors to obtain useful feedback on what, how much, and how well their learners are learning. Angelo & Cross (1993) noted that the fundamental goal of higher education is "to produce the highest possible quality of student learning" (p. 3). The term assessment is used to measure educational effectiveness.

The driving force behind developing assessment instrument in journalism and mass communication in higher education is the emphasis on the course, accountability, and student's progress. Higher education educators, particularly in journalism and mass communication courses are expected to enhance and document how instruction has affected student's learning outcomes, because educators are mostly involved in the delivery of knowledge and skill to these students. Assessment enables the educator to reflect upon course instruction, and students' progress in order to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and to plan for instructional improvement.

How might educators use the ideas in this paper? The fundamental proposition of this article is that journalism and mass communication educators should examine their current assessment practices in relation to the self-regulation model and to the principles. An examination of their current assessment practices might help identify where assessment practices might be strengthened. The principles discussed in this article do not deplete educators' self-regulated enhancement to learning about journalism and mass communication courses in higher education but a conception. This exploration challenge is to cultivate the principles, identify gaps and to gather further evidence about the potential of formative assessment and feedback to support self-regulation.

### **Measures of Assessment**

Assessments are designed to measure and reflect broad-based agreement on what student should know and be able to do. It is important that assessment results and product results match the learning goals and objectives that are important to students, teachers, and society. Students in journalism and mass communication programs in formal higher educational institutions need direction and support (Pratt, 1988). Pratt (1988) model established the level of students' competence in deciding what to learn and how to carry out the learning process (direction) and their competence to do so (support). His model provided the foundation for initiating a partnership between instructors and students (Pratt, 1988).

The information about the category of the direction of what students require is acquired through a "needs assessment". Student involvement in needs assessment initiates a partnership with the instructor and the student. With needs assessment, students are able to identify their problem areas in relation to the project topics, which are frequently a starting point for their learning (Cranton 1989). Vella (1994) looked at the needs assessment process as the WWW question: Who needs What as defined by Whom, in which Who is the learners, WHAT are their needs, and WHOM are the definers.

Informal learning is the core of education and self-directed learning. It is the process in which individuals take on the responsibility for their own learning process by diagnosing their personal learning needs, setting goals, identifying resources, implementing strategies and evaluating the outcomes. Before an educator designs a lecture for the students, he/she finds some practical and feasible ways of involving a sample of students, who are representatives of the class so that their themes are heard and respected.

Self-directed learning is augmented with facilitation and providing resources. Motivation is key to a successful self-directed learning experience for students.

According to ACEJMC, assessment of learning outcomes standard (9) required for institutions or units seeking accreditation suggest that the institutions or units' assessment plan should have at least two direct measures and at least two indirect measures to assess students' learning (Brown et al., 2012). For the purpose of this article, it is important to understand that ACEJMC does not prescribe specific measures of assessment, rather endorses and encourages experts in the field and unit to create and apply measures that reflect their missions and goals as well as that of ACEJMC (Brown et al., 2012).

### **Direct measures**

Direct measures require students to demonstrate their learning (Brown et al., 2012). These measures examine actual student work to determine whether students demonstrate the knowledge, values and competencies required to achieve program goals (Brown et al., 2012). (Examples: examinations, capstone projects, student portfolios, aggregate internship evaluations, and course embedded assessment)

### **Indirect measures**

Indirect measures captures perceptions, attitudes and outcomes of the learning experience (Brown et al., 2012). These include self-reports of student learning or data and outcomes that indicate program goals have been achieved (Brown et al., 2012). (Examples: student surveys, alumni surveys, employer surveys, exit interviews, focus groups, student awards, graduation and employment data).

### **Concepts of Learning Assessment Method**

The study on concept of assessment and reaction is re-interpreted to demonstrate how the procedure can help students to take control of their learning and help educators in journalism and mass communication to modify their lectures for all students. Since, students in journalism and mass communication courses are self-regulated learners, this reformation is used to identify the principles of good feedback practice that support self-regulation. The discussion in this article is that individual student are assessing their own learning and creating their own feedback, which journalism and mass communication instructors in higher education should build on this ability. The concept of formative assessment that supports the principle of feedback, whereby students are seen as having a proactive rather than a reactive role in generating and using feedback, which has profound implications for the way in which their instructors organize assessments and underpin learning.

This exploration discussed that formations of assessment have fell behind formations of journalism and mass communication courses in higher education. While students have been given more responsibility for learning in journalism and mass communication in recent years, there has been far greater unwillingness to give students increased responsibility for assessment processes. If students in journalism and mass communication are to be prepared for lecture, instructors in these areas must provide them with opportunities to develop the capacity to regulate their own learning as they progress through higher education. This article discussed formative assessment and feedback and provided principles of good feedback practice that addresses the cognitive, behavioral and motivational aspects of self-regulation.

The concepts of learning assessment method in journalism and mass communication programs in higher education institutions are Formative vs Summative, Setting Targets and Writing Objectives, and Reliability and Validity. The focus on concepts of learning assessment method for this article is to understand the difference between formative and summative assessments. In higher education, knowledge gathered from assessments and evaluations is used to shape strategies for improvement of students. Learning assessment methods help instructors grasp students' understanding, and adjust teaching style to meet identified learning needs. Formative assessment methods are a form of carrying out the project and summative assessment method is the learning outcomes of the course.

Stiggins (2001) noted that setting clear and achievable targets is the starting point for creating assessments for students in journalism and mass communication program. Educators need to determine what exactly their students should know or be able to do. There are many areas and types of achievement that are targeted in journalism and mass communication courses in higher education, including knowledge, reasoning, performance, product development, and attitudes (Stiggins, 2001).

## **Methodology**

Educators' toolkit for teaching-learning assessment in journalism and mass communication education presents major challenges for students and educators. Within the literature related to teaching-learning in journalism and mass communication, a gap exists. This gap identified in literature presents the researcher an opportunity to examine educator's toolkit for teaching-learning assessment in journalism and mass communication education in higher education. The author used a generic qualitative research approach to examine formative and summative assessment as the toolkit for teaching-learning in journalism and mass communication. This generic qualitative study investigated educators' toolkit for teaching-learning assessment in journalism and mass communication education. The purpose of this generic qualitative research design was to examine how students/educators in journalism and mass communication adjust to teaching-learning using formative assessment to achieve a better learning outcome.

The researcher used Generic qualitative research design to collect and analyze data (Cooper and Endacott, 2007) from educators and students in journalism and mass communication. The educators and students' personal viewpoint, perspective, reliance, or experiences of issues in learning and teaching journalism and mass communication cannot be measured in the statistical sense, as a result requires a qualitative approach (Aronson, 1994). There are other qualitative research approaches that are more focused such as ethnography, case study, grounded theory, or phenomenology, but are not suitable for this study, therefore the researcher selected generic qualitative inquiry approach as the appropriate qualitative research design (Merriam, 2014) to examine toolkit for teaching and learning in journalism and mass communication. Formative assessment evaluation is a complex assessment, and sometimes very uncomfortable for the educator, therefore generic qualitative research method was used to examine the complex situations (Alves, Azevedo, & Goncalves, 2012; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). Assessment is complex, thus generic qualitative analysis was appropriate approach to gather data to determine if the student grasp what their educator are teaching in journalism and mass communication courses for successful learning outcome. A generic qualitative design enabled this investigator to collect information from students and educators about students learning outcomes and educators teaching effectiveness in journalism and mass communication.

Merriam (2014) stated that generic studies seek to understand how educators and students interpreted, constructed, or make meaning from their teaching-learning and their struggle and challenges. The author's theoretically interpretive perspective was to examine educator's toolkit for teaching and learning assessment in journalism and mass communication, how educators and students in journalism and mass communication construct their teaching-learning, and what meaning they attribute to their struggle and challenges. Lim (2011), argued that the goal of generic qualitative studies is to offer a rich description of the phenomenon under investigation

The author used a generic qualitative research approach to conduct a semi-structured face-to-face interview of educators and the students. Generic qualitative approach provided opportunities for this author to identify the effectiveness of using formative assessment to achieve a learning outcome in journalism and mass communication courses, in the participants' descriptive responses was the most logical platform to examine participants' subjective opinions of their learning outcomes (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015).

Generic qualitative approach enabled this author to gain a deeper knowledge about how students learn and educators teach. The author used generic qualitative approach because the focus of this article was to understand the learning outcome of journalism and mass communication courses. According to Cooper and Endacott, (2007) generic qualitative research is used more frequently than in the past and about in-depth understanding of formative assessment compared to summative assessment through the eyes of participants in this study (Merriam, 2011). The author used generic qualitative research design to describe in participants' own words how an educator's toolkit for learning-teaching contributed to learning outcome in journalism and mass communications. Caelli, Ray, and Mill (2003) asserted that generic qualitative inquiry has no adherence to a particular methodology or philosophical viewpoint.

## **Research Strategy**

This researcher collected data using semi-structured interviews and analyzed it using generic qualitative methods. The interview questions yielded opinions on the type of toolkit for teaching-learning assessment that was appropriate for educator to address the unique experiences of individual students' barriers or hurdles to learning.

Participants in the study were educators and students in journalism and mass communication who provided comprehensive response from their own point-of-views on the benefit of formative assessment compared to summative assessment benefit. The author conducted an extensive search with the terms formative and summative assessment, assessment strategies, journalism and mass communication courses, and assessment instrument, found that there was limited information on teaching-learning assessment in journalism and mass communication education courses in higher education. This absence of recent studies in educators' toolkit for teaching and learning in journalism and mass communication education courses suggests the need for a study of formative assessment in journalism and mass communication education. Through this qualitative generic study approach of semi-structured face-to-face interview of students and educators, foundations for more examination in this area are created for new studies.

### **Sample**

This study included a representative sample of educators and students in journalism and mass communication education to express their point-of view. A purposeful sampling technique was used (Merriam, 2014). This researcher typically used a sampling technique based on what the researcher wanted to understand (Creswell, 2013). The objective of this study is to understand the toolkit for teaching-learning assessment in journalism and mass communication education. Educators and students were chosen from the department of Journalism and mass communication. Participant included educators who are full time faculty and have taught journalism mass communication courses for at least five years, and junior and senior students classification in the department of journalism and mass communication. The sample size was determined on the response received by the researcher and the interview questions (Merriam, 2011) and researcher recruited until he reach saturation to meet the goals of the research study. Merriam (2011) stated that it is essential to terminate data collection when the information acquired is becoming similar.

In contrast, Thorne et al. (2002) warned against stopping data collection too soon because the information may not be the same due to the diversity and demographics of participants. In a generic qualitative research the standard sample size ranges from 10 to 12 respondents (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Participants were selected from journalism and mass communication who have met the criteria described above. In this study, five educator and five students in journalism and mass communication were the sample size, but the researcher stopped recruiting when he reached saturation.

### **Formative and Summative Assessment**

The terms "formative" and "summative" are introduced in the context of program evaluation in the 60's (Scriven M; 1967). This was elaborated to include formative assessment as a component of the teaching-learning process (Bloom, 1968). The difference between formative and summative assessment is how the educator uses the data collected during teaching-learning process (DiVall et al., 2014). The assessment that happens at the end of the teaching-learning process is called Summative and the assessment that occurs during that process is formative assessment. According to DiVall et al., (2014) data acquired from formative assessment are used to modify the instructional experience during teaching-learning process based on how well students are progressing in their achievement of intended outcomes which helps the educator and the student adjust immediately. Summative assessments occur at the end of the teaching-learning process, as a result data collected that might improve the process will be applied the next time the course is offered, leaving no opportunity for students currently enrolled to benefit from such changes (DiVall et al., 2014). They noted that the term "assessment *for* learning" to describe formative assessment and the term "assessment *of* learning" to describe summative assessment (DiVall et al., 2014). Summative is designed to confirm what students have learned and can do at the end of instruction while formative assessment activities are typically instructionally embedded in a class activity and are designed to guide instructional decisions (Angelo and Cross, 1993).

### **Summative Assessments**

Summative Assessments are given periodically to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know. Summative assessments are typically used to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs and services at the end of an academic year or at a pre-determined time (Stiggins, 2001). According to Stiggins, (2001) the goal of summative assessments is to make a judgment of learner's competency after an instructional phase is complete. For example, most higher education institution administers an "Exit Exams" once a year for graduating seniors; as a result it is a summative assessment that determines each graduating student's ability at pre-determined points in time.

Summative evaluations are used to determine if students have mastered specific competencies and to identify instructional areas that may need additional attention (Stiggins, 2001). This assessment occurs *after* instruction every few weeks, months, or once a year, consequently, summative assessments are tools to help evaluate the faculty effectiveness, effectiveness of the programs, school improvement goals, alignment of curriculum, or student placement in specific programs, makes instructional adjustments and interventions *during* the learning process (Stiggins, 2001). It takes formative assessment to accomplish this.

### **Formative Assessments**

Scriven, (1967) and Bloom, (1968) agreed that formative assessment is used to modify subsequent educational pronouncements and consequently provide feedback and allow for correction at any stage in the learning process (Bloom, 1969). Literature suggest that formative assessments include information that student success tools were used by teachers and learners to make decisions pertaining to subsequent steps in instruction that were likely to be better than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of such evidence (Black, & Wiliam, 2009). Anderson (2005) defined formative assessment as an assessment used for individual improvement rather than making final decisions or accountability. He noted that formative assessment play an important role in providing information needed to make immediate modifications in teaching and learning and in the program (Anderson, 2005).

Formative assessment method offers a powerful means for providing learners with knowledge and skills for learning in journalism and mass communication. Instructors in journalism and mass communication should use the instruments and techniques of formative assessment to reveal students' understanding and progress toward objectives. As a result of instructor skillful teaching to meet the journalism and mass communication students identified needs, he draws upon a range of learning tasks and challenges to help students address deficiency (Dogini, 2016). Therefore, the approach to learning assessment and acclimatization to teaching journalism and mass communication students, the learning process should conform to the instructor's pedagogical strength and subject knowledge.

Stiggins (2001) asserted that formative assessments are on-going assessments, reviews, and observations in a journalism and mass communication programs. In journalism and mass communication education courses, instructors use formative assessment to improve instructional methods and learners feedback throughout the teaching and learning process (Stiggins, 2001). For example, if an instructor observes that a student or some students do not grasp a concept, he should design a review activity or use a different instructional strategy. Students can monitor their progress by weighing them with periodic performance tasks.

Garrison, C., and Ehringhaus, M. (2007) asserted that formative assessment provides the data needed to adjust teaching and learning while they occur to inform the teacher and student about the students' understanding at a point when they could make timely adjustments in learning the objectives within a set time frame. Formative assessment is "practice." Educators use formative assessment to determine the next steps during the teaching-learning process as his/her instruction approach the summative assessment of student learning. It is important to understand that implementing formative assessment effectively needs students' involvement, because students need to be involved both as assessors of their own learning and as resources to other students (Garrison, C., & Ehringhaus, M., 2007). On the other hand the educators need to identify the learning objective and set a clear criteria for success, and designing assessment tasks that would provide evidence of student learning (Garrison, C., & Ehringhaus, M., 2007).

### **Classroom Assessment Techniques**

The fundamental concern in educational reform is about better learning and more effective teaching, which classroom assessment techniques seek to answer by addressing how well student learn and how effective teachers teach. Classroom assessment was designed to encourage college teachers to become thoughtful educators of learning as it is carried out in their classrooms. Classroom assessment involves student and teachers monitoring students' learning, as well as provide faculty with feedback about their teaching effectiveness and opportunity to students to measure their progress as learners. The educators create, administer, analyze the questions of teaching-learning that is important to them, understanding the likelihood that their response of the assessment may be used to greatly enhance or question their own teaching (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

Many times, students do not learn as much as the teacher anticipated (Angelo & Cross, 1993), which means there is gap between what is taught and what was learned.

These gaps in knowledge and understanding are very difficult for the educator to identify, and most often when they find out it is too late to remedy the problems. Angelo & Cross, (1993) defined "Classroom Assessment" as formative rather than a summative method to assessment designed to improve the quality of student learning, not to provide evidence for evaluating or grading students. Classroom assessment provides instructor with feedback about their effectiveness as teachers, and it gives students a measure of their progress as learners, while the teaching-learning relationship is still undamaged. The use of classroom assessment benefits both the educator and the students. The educator focuses more on student learning to determine what students have learned and what is unclear, and for students that may be hesitant to ask questions during class, classroom assessments provide anonymous feedback to the instructor about their learning (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

### **Classroom Strategies**

Educators create classroom assessment techniques to provide formative feedback, which can range from a simple, elaborate sensitive tool to a complex process that requires good understanding and readiness. This article discussed some of classroom formative assessment methods that can be used formatively.

### **Prior Knowledge Assessment**

This formative assessment is an approach for assessing prior knowledge, recall, and understanding (Angelo & Cross, 1993). The starting point of any lecture in journalism and mass communication is the understanding and knowing what your students know about the objective of the course and how to begin the instruction (Angelo & Cross, 1993). To know what the student know, the educator needs to collect data regarding the level of readiness of the student at the beginning of the course, the teacher needs to administer a prior knowledge assessment. This type of assessment is typically a few open-ended questions, short answers, or multiple-choice questions (Angelo & Cross, 1993). This method requires preparation in advance of the class and time to review the scores or responses and, possibly, time in class to administer the assessment. Since the students know there is no grade involved with completing the assessment, they may not feel the need to provide an accurate answer or complete the assessment. Since most journalism and mass communication course require prior knowledge, this formative assessment helps the educator to find out and understand the students' "starting point" knowledge level; and to get a rough sense of how much and how well they have learned the material.

### **Background Knowledge Probe**

This background knowledge probe is an approach for assessing prior knowledge, recall, and understanding (Angelo & Cross, 1993). This formative assessment allows the educators to determine the topic and the course classification to begin instruction, and how to start the lecture. As the educator investigates the background knowledge before he/she begins formal lecture on that topic, the probe provides educator a feedback on the level of preparation the students have before enrolling in a particular class (Angelo & Cross, 1993). This technique is best used at the first class meeting and the educator uses it to evaluate if there has being changes in students' knowledge and response and administers same questions at the end of the lesson, unit, and mid-semester (Angelo & Cross, 1993). This technique are short, simple questionnaires created by the educator at beginning of the course requesting students to list the course they have taken in journalism and communication prior to introducing a new topic. This are general known in higher education as pre- and post- assessments to find out the students' knowledge level and if they have learned the material.

### **The One-Minute Paper**

The minute paper method is the approach for assessing prior knowledge, recall, and understanding and provides useful feedback and encourages students to listen and reflect on what they have learned in class (Angelo & Cross, 1993). The purpose of one-minute paper technique is to allow the educator faculty to assess the match between their instructional objectives and students' insights of the course objectives and their own learning (Angelo & Cross, 1993). One-minute paper technique, the educator stops the lecture few minutes early and asks students to respond briefly in writing to some variation of the following two questions (Angelo & Cross, 1993). This type of assessment is appropriate journalism and mass communication course because of the size of the class. It is a useful assessment that focuses on a specific topic or concept as students reflect on and write down the most important thing they learned and acknowledge what questions they have in identifying the most important point(s) from the lecture.

**Muddiest Point:**

Muddiest point methods is an approach for assessing prior knowledge, recall, and understanding and provide useful feedback and encourage students to listen and reflect on what they have learned in class (Angelo & Cross, 1993). This is a fast technique that provides immediate feedback from the student on what is confusing on the lecture or areas the lecture is/was least clear. The data collected helps the educator decide how much time to spend on a topics. Educators use this technique's feedback in courses that present new data and identify areas of difficulty for the students and address them in a timely manner in class. Educator ask the students after lecture, assignment, homework, the film, the video, and production to share what they thought was the lecture's muddiest point (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

**Directed Paraphrasing**

This method is an approach for assessing skill in application and performance and examines responses for accuracy, suitability for the intended audience, and effectiveness in fulfilling the assigned purpose (Angelo & Cross, 1993). This method helps the educator to examine students' understanding of information discussed and their ability to transform that information into a form that can be meaningful to specific audiences other than the student and instructor. Directed paraphrasing the educator asks students to paraphrase part of the lecture for a specific audience and using their own words which is useful and appropriate for journalism and mass communication education students who will be asked in their careers to translate specialized information into language that the audience understands (Angelo & Cross, 1993). For students of journalism and mass communication this task works well because journalist learns concepts that they will later be expected to communicate to their audience. In this technique, the educator directs the student to speak/write to other students in the class or to other freshmen on campus.

**Audience response systems: "clickers:"**

The use of technology in journalism and mass communication has become common in the classroom, particularly clickers and multiple tools are available that allow the educator to pose questions to the class and get response from students. (Liu, Mauther & Schwarz, 200). Clickers are technology used in most classroom as response systems to quizzes, voting, and active learning by students that connects to a receiver or personal electronic devices (eg, smartphones, tablets, or computers) that transmit responses via the Internet. Multiple tools and technologies are available that allow the instructor to project or pose questions to the class and gather answers from students. Each student or a group of students use a clicker that connects to a receiver or personal electronic devices (eg, smartphones, tablets, or computers) that transmit answers via the Internet. Educators use clickers and associated technologies as an assessment technique for both formative and summative to engage students in the classroom in traditional question-and-answer active-learning activities while providing assessment data (Kelly, Beatty, Legg & McAuley, 2008). The response from the student helps the educator to engage the student in active learning, and learning outcomes (Berry, 2009; Gauci, Dantas, Williams, & Kemm 2009).

**Case studies:**

Case studies are useful tools that converge principles, stories, concepts, and knowledge (Schwarz, & Eikenburg, 2011) The process involves providing stories to be reported on several media outlets. The cases or stories are information from college newspaper or breaking news that are suitable for the level and background of the students. Students may work independently or in groups, are asked to address stories related questions regarding college newspaper or breaking news they choose, and long-term consequences of the story. Students are given time to prepare their responses, and the educator or facilitator engages the students in discussion as they respond to the questions while the facilitator engages the students in discussion. Students involved in this method of assessment learn to develop how to tell good story, critical-thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. Educators use the exercise in this assessment to assess student performance, difficulty of material, and success of the lecture. Journalism and mass communication course requires time outside class, such as a shooting video, editing and collecting news report are used to complement and supplement material presented in lecture as formative assessment data. This method of assessment is particularly helpful in teaching foundational broadcast journalism production in mass communication; however, an educator's lack of storytelling expertise and/or students' lack of background knowledge of storytelling can make this a frightening undertaking.

### **The One-Sentence Summary**

This method of assessment is very useful for journalism and mass communication students in beginning news writing courses. The purpose of this formative assessment is for the educator to gauge the student ability to condense a large amount of information concisely and completely. Students are constrained by the rules of sentence construction and reason creatively about the content learned. The educator asks students to address questions about "Who does what to whom, when, where, how, and why" and the student are asked to convert responses to those questions into broadcast writing style. This helps the educator to determine whether students are more proficient at the who's and what's rather than the how's and whys.

### **Formative Assessment of Faculty Teaching**

Angelo and Cross, (1993) asserted that the objective of formative assessment is to provide feedback from students in a course in a timely manner for improvement of teaching-learning in educational settings. Formative helps assessment improve students' learning and helps improve educator's effectiveness in teaching. Most institutions of higher learning develop a measure or items to improve student performance, as a result established a way for educator to strengthen their teaching abilities through classroom assessment techniques, student teaching evaluations, portfolios, self-reflections, performance evaluations, and peer assessments (Turpen, et al., 2012; Trujillo, et al., 2008). Studies has shown that higher institution of learning use student teaching evaluations as one major foundation for assessing teachers' effectiveness (Seldin, & Hutchings, 1999). Unfortunate, this summative assessment of students evaluation happens at the end of each course every semester, is often used by the institution of higher learning to measures educators for promotion and tenure decisions (DiVall et al., 2014; Turpen, et al., 2012).

There has been debates amongst educators and publications questioning the validity and reliability of student perceptions using summative student teaching evaluations (DiVall et al., 2014; Arreola, 2000; Seldin, & Hutchings, 1999). Arreola (2000) argued that students are not qualified to evaluate certain aspects of teaching to assess educator in terms of the quality of teaching performance in areas such as content expertise, teaching methods, and knowledge. Williams et al., (2001) disagrees, asserting that student teaching evaluation are "reliable, valid, relatively unbiased, and useful. They argued that student teaching evaluation is essential in educator professional development, and the types of engagements needed to improve teaching and a way of getting comprehensive and constructive feedback at the end of the course from unwilling students that know that they may not likely to benefit from future improvements of that course (Williams et al., 2001).

In journalism and mass communication, like in other discipline, educators focus on written comments than the mean scores when reviewing student teaching evaluations (Elzubeir & Rizk, 2002). DiVall et al., (2014) noted that formative assessment will be good idea to get feedback from students during mid-semester. However, request for written comments rather than ratings because making decision on an educator based on student ratings are not sufficient evidence to evaluate teaching effectiveness of an educator (Arreola, 2000) in journalism and mass communication. This mid-semester formative assessment will allow educators to make adjustments in instruction or the course content and immediately benefit the students (Elzubeir & Rizk, 2002). DiVall et al., (2014) suggested that this mid-semester formative feedback may be administered by institution assessment personnel dedicated to improvement of teaching and learning, the educator, or student leaders.

Most institutions of higher learning and the discipline of journalism and mass communications practice colleagues' peer reviews of classroom teaching (Barnett, & Matthews, 2009). Consequently, the combination of student teaching evaluations, and peer reviews often as summative assessment are used by institution to measure educator for promotion and tenure decision-making. According to Turpen et al., (2012) institutions of higher learning rely on student teaching evaluations feedback for faculty performance evaluations. The feedback from peers review are used to enhance the quality of teaching using formative assessment to serve as a powerful tool for teaching effectiveness in journalism and mass communication (Barnett, & Matthews, 2009). For an educator to successfully implement formative assessment feedback, he/she will require an understanding of the teaching of journalism and mass communication education and agreed-upon best practices for the institution on how to provide effective constructive feedback.

Educator in journalism and mass communication education often base the assessment of their own teaching effectiveness on student test performance. Formative assessments provides feedback on students learning to improve the quality of teaching in the journalism and mass communication classroom.

Implementation of classroom assessment techniques as those discussed above in this article, educators can measure understanding, obtain immediate feedback, and allows educator to modify their teaching before the end of the semester. Formative and summative student feedback help improve effective communication or organization of journalism and mass communication courses or lectures.

### **Recommendation**

This article discussed some formative assessment techniques that may be used to improve students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in journalism and mass communication classroom setting. Formative feedback is aimed at instructors to develop faculty members and improves the quality of teaching. This article recommends that journalism and mass communication educators construct a culture that encourages "formative failure" as a component of learning. This concept permits the student to make mistakes and learn from their mistake before being formally assessed on the assignment as well as helps the educator to experiment in order to further refine their teaching abilities.

The author recommends that educators in journalism and mass communication learn to effectively integrate some of formative assessment strategies outlined in this article into their teaching for students to achieve the superlative learning outcomes. Foundations of feedback for journalism and mass communication students include competency benchmarks, instructors, peers, advisors, employers, storytelling, and self-reflection. However, educators of journalism and mass communication should reflect on their performance by triangulating feedback from students teaching evaluation and peers review as an evidence of teaching-learning from formative and summative assessments.

### **Conclusion**

The outstanding features in studying teaching-learning assessment in journalism and mass communication in higher education have been the shift in the focus of attention, towards greater interest in assessment and classroom learning. Studies on learning assessment indicate that improvement in learning assessment will contribute to the improvement of learning for students in journalism and mass communication education in higher education. Connecting the real life experience of a student, and the curriculum that is directed towards their background, the students grasp much better. When a student's background and life experiences are not part or included in the curriculum, the student is being removed from literacy activities (Ferdman, 1990). Teachers should construct on students' background and experience to increase their academic achievement in journalism and mass communication and make learning more relevant to their experience and background (Neuman, 1999). It is clear that when formative assessment is included in instruction, learning in journalism and mass communication is enhanced. Formative and summative assessment provide a gateway to successful improvement for students that have difficulty learning how to package a news story, write in broadcast style, public relation campaign, and storytelling in journalism and mass communication courses. Educators should lead the way to celebrate students' personal connection to new ideas.

Effective use of formative assessment of student learning outcomes and improving teaching effectiveness should unshackle the educator to teach essential material, the students to learn from their mistakes, and the culture of the journalism and mass communication in higher education to focus on outcomes. To properly address teaching-learning gaps in journalism and mass communication programs, educators need to document their student's achievement of educational outcomes and provide the information needed to improve the curriculum in a well-structured formative and summative assessment.

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