IMPORTANCE OF ONLINE ASSESSMENT IN THE E-LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract. In this paper, we present some general aspects of the On-line Assessment activity. For the purpose of this paper, we want to focus in the assessment activity that take place in the e-learning process and discuss the importance of this action for each participant of the process.

Key words: On-line learning, adaptive learning environments, assessment in e-learning, learning technologies.
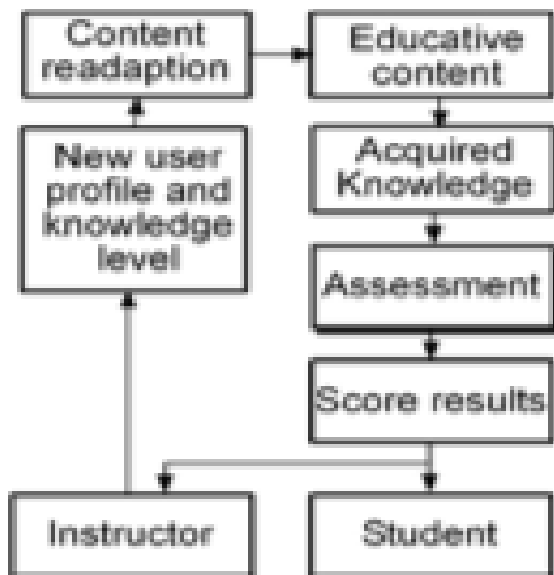
Introduction. In recent years, instructional and educational institutions have been incorporating information and communication technologies in learning and teaching processes in order to increase the quality, efficiency, and dissemination of education. As long as those projects cover the needs of individuals in a particularly way, the success and transcendence of such developments could be incremented by performing adaptability to each user so the learning experience can be enhanced. To be sure that all of these efforts don't become groups of isolated isles, most of these projects look to be compliant to some accepted standards, so they can be applicable, compatible and interchangeable between them. One accepted standard is the IMS, a global learning consortium that develops and promotes the adoption of open technical specifications for interoperable learning technologies that become the standards for delivering learning products worldwide. Among the inherent importance of these works, we want to emphasize in the role of the assessment activity inside the e-learning process. We want to concentrate in this task, and see how it can help to improve the e-learning process to all the participants: students, teachers, and content designers. Conceptualizing the learning process to its basic elements, we can identify at last the following elements: **1.** The educational material to be taught by the teacher in a classroom. **2.** The teaching and learning activities that take place in a classroom. **3.** The assessment activity to measure the student learning. **4.** The report of the score

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results given by the teachers to the students. This conception is well suitable for the traditional educative process. However, this is a more complex process in which there are several factors that should be taken into account like student learning styles, the technical implications, the adaptive educative content, the learning and knowledge management, feedback, motivation, etc. Traditionally, assessment activity has been seen like task aside of the e-learning process and there is a danger in focusing research on assessment specifically , as this tends to isolate the assessment process from teaching and learning in general. In picture 1, we characterize the importance of assessment in the learning flow. As we can note, the tests and evaluations not only are an integral part of the learning process, but also is an element that complete and close a circular activity, contributing as a feedback source for: the users (giving the scores and feedback), for the instructors (by giving support and feedback) and for the instructional designer (to update the contents of the learning system) as well. This circular conceptualization of the learning process allow us to see the significance of the assessment because it helps to the adaptation of the system by setting a new user knowledge level, evaluating and determining new learning profiles, assign the user grades and, in consequence, performing user content re adaptation. This is how we see the importance of the assessment task for the adaptation process.

Importance for the User. For the student, the assessment activity informs progress and guide learning; also, it is essential for the accreditation process and measures the success of the student. Assessment tasks can be seen as the active components of study, also assignments provide learners with opportunities to discover whether they understand and not, if they are able to perform competently and demonstrate what they have learnt in their studies. Furthermore, the feedback and grades that assessors communicate to students serve to both teach and motivate. In addition, we have to consider another and emerging approach for online assessment that refers to group collaboration, sharing and learning where students are able to see solutions to authentic problems from many other students. It is necessary to mention that a fast, instantly and effective feedback is very important to the learners, also to have access to multiple attempts, take charge of their own learning and track their own progress. Removing the need for fixed delivery dates and locations normally required in traditional tests is seen as a benefit for the students. Conclusively, we would like to mention an assessment categorization:• Formative assessment: this is an assessment that helps to give a convenient feedback and motivation to the student and do not have scores. Also brings convenient feedback to designers of materials. • Summative assessment: this is a scored assessment and gives a result to measure outcomes and success of the learner. • Norm assessment: use the achievements of a group to set the standards for specific grades and is used in most universities. • Criterion assessment: establish the standard (criterion) and mark students against it.• There is another kind of assessment called alternative assessment. Here, the integration of the assessment activity with learning processes and real-life performance as opposed to display of "inert knowledge". Know as authentic assessment it is very much based on the constructivist approach that enables students to demonstrate knowledge by working on authentic task, putting students un control of their own learning and helping the students to develop the necessary skill for autonomous (and lifelong) learning.

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