



Assessment, Learning and Technology Solutions

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Assessment, Learning and Technology Solutions (ALTS)

ALTS is located in the prestigious University of Nebraska Technology Park and specializes in providing software to assess learning as well as professional development workshops to empower teachers, professors and corporate trainers to increase learning in their own classrooms.

Software

ALTS Assessment Management System™ software empowers teachers to create accurate assessments and make valid decisions that facilitate learning. This innovative, easy-to-use software package enables teachers to create, edit and administer their own assessments. The system makes data analysis and the tracking of student performance very manageable from the teacher's desktop. ALTS software is the kind of tool that every teacher would like to have. It keeps questions and assessments organized and calculates all of the most important statistics teachers need. The statistics are color coded for ease of interpretation and indicate how well each question and each assessment works, and the success level of each student.

High-quality assessment

High-quality assessment goes beyond simply asking questions. It includes asking questions, in carefully selected sets that target specific content and assess learning at specific levels of cognitive processing. The set of questions selected for an assessment must work well together as a team and consistently produce reliable results. Taken as a group, the set of questions that comprise an assessment must produce scores that are fair to the test takers.

In a well-designed assessment, if the purpose is to reinforce learning, questions are purposefully sequenced to reinforce the conceptual threads and logic -- ways of thinking about the subject that the teacher strove to impart during instruction. At the end of such an assessment, students usually know more than they did before they started taking the assessment; and, they can feel it!

Another significant benefit of well-designed assessments is that teachers obtain scores that are more accurate measures of what students know and can do. Thus, they are able to make more valid decisions for the benefit of the students – they can actually give credit when credit is due, know when mastery has occurred and make plans for future learning that connects well and builds upon what is currently known. Accurate assessment also facilitates more open, honest communication with parents and school administrators.



Outstanding Teacher

An outstanding teacher does many things well. She understands what is in her curriculum documents and knows how to translate these learning objectives into lesson plans. She has a wide repertoire of teaching strategies and is constantly on the lookout for interesting activities to engage the attention of her students and optimize learning.

She knows about the role of questions, assessment and high quality feedback in the learning process. She generates questions, on the fly, to check for understanding while each individual student is involved in the learning process. She also knows that questions used to check for understanding are qualitatively different questions from those used to stimulate prior knowledge centers in the brain before instruction begins, and are also qualitatively different from questions used to evaluate whether the new material has been consolidated and saved in long-term storage centers in the brain. She is adept at designing questions with her learning purposes in mind, and uses the answers to these questions as feedback to choose new learning activities, and modify her instructional approach and increase learning.

Professional Development

ALTS workshops seek to create outstanding teachers. Our workshop series typically begin with sessions on “The human brain and learning” and proceed to provide practical guidelines for creating student-centered learning environments by improving instruction, questioning strategies and assessment. The next full day workshop in the series typically focuses on “Aligning curriculum, assessment and instruction” for clear communication and effective learning. Days 3 and 4 in the ALTS Assessment Workshop Series go into details of test construction and question writing, with specific attention to validity, reliability and equity. After this foundation is laid, future sessions are customized to the specific remaining needs of the participants. These might include topics such as scoring and the creation of rubrics, scoring guides and performance checklists; writing proficiency level descriptions and, standard or cut score setting.