

## Leeds Met ASSIMILATE Glossary

Term	Meaning
Adaptive feedback	Pitching feedback on assessed work so as to take into consideration a students' past performances in similar tasks. In other words, purposefully adapting feedback to individual students, so as to be most useful to them, rather than just giving feedback relating to the same criteria to each student.
Adaptive testing	A test, often computer-based (such as multiple choice questions) where the level of the questions is adjusted continuously depending on the candidate's success level. For example, if the candidate gets difficult questions right, more difficult questions are 'fired', or if the candidate gets easy ones wrong, easier ones are 'fired'. The computer then works out the candidate's score taking all this into account. A very strong candidate may only need to answer a small number of questions to get a high score.
Andragogy	A term used by some theorists to describe 'adult learning' as opposed to 'children's learning'. The term is disputed, however, and many think there's no difference (or at least not when we're thinking about university learning).
Assessment	In the UK, assessment normally means ways and means of measuring students' learning – e.g. exams, essays, dissertations, presentations and so on. In the US, however, assessment usually means what we call evaluation – seeking and analysing feedback on how well a course is running. Other countries use one or another of these meanings of assessment or evaluation, and it's important to check up which they really mean when working in a different country from the UK.
Asynchronous learning	Learning going on at different times, and different speeds by different learners. For example independent computer-based learning, where learners can learn at times of their own choice, and put in different amounts of time. They may all have to achieve particular levels of learning by particular deadlines, however (for example stages of preparing a Masters thesis). Asynchronous learning is where everyone is learning the same thing at the same time – like in lectures (sometimes!).
Authentic assessment	Assessment which is closely related to what the students are intended to do in the careers towards which they are heading. For example, authentic assessment of medical students may get them diagnosing patients, analysing case notes, talking to patients (actors) and so on; journalism students may be assessed on writing to deadlines, writing to word limits, adjusting the tone of an article to particular target reader audiences, and so on.
Bologna	The purpose of the Bologna process (or Bologna accords) is to create the European higher education area by making academic degree standards and quality assurance standards more comparable and compatible throughout Europe, in particular under the Lisbon Recognition Convention. It is named after the place it was proposed, the University of Bologna in the Italian city of Bologna, with the signing in 1999 of the Bologna declaration by Ministers of Education from 29 European countries.
Case study	A scenario, depicting a real or imaginary instance, often used to ask students to make decisions or judgements, for example on what should best be done in the circumstances described. As an assessment device, this allows students to focus on a particular small body of information, and apply their learning to that.
Coaching	One of the most intense and 'intimate' forms of teaching and learning, sometimes one-to-one, or one-to-small group, where

## Leeds Met ASSIMILATE Glossary

Term	Meaning
	learners continuously receive a great deal of feedback on their performance from the coach, and are helped to continuously improve their performance. The term is well known in sport, but coaching can work in just about any learning context – lecturers can be coached to become even better teachers, for example.
Constructive alignment	This term arose from the work of John Biggs, and refers to harmonising teaching processes, assessment formats and feedback mechanisms to link well to the evidence of achievement of specified intended learning outcomes. For example, assessment should not just be ‘bolted on’ to a module, but rather planned carefully throughout the process of curriculum design.
Constructivism	‘Constructivist learning theory’ suggests that learning always builds upon knowledge that a student already knows, and can be regarded as learning-by-doing or experiential learning. It is about various forms of guided discovery where the teacher avoids most direct instruction and attempts to lead the student through questions and activities to discover, discuss, appreciate and verbalize new knowledge.
Criterion referenced	Criterion referenced testing is where marks or scores are related directly to candidates meeting clear assessment criteria in their work. The purpose is simply to see whether or not the student has learned the material to an identified level of success. If all candidates meet the criteria, for example at ‘distinction’ level, they would all be awarded ‘distinction’ grades. The opposite kind of testing is ‘norm-referenced’ testing, where (for example) only a set proportion of the candidates would be allowed to achieve distinction grading (for example the top quarter).
Dissertation	A relatively extended document submitted as part of the assessment for a degree or professional qualification, presenting the author’s research, findings and reviews of relevant scholarly literature. Undergraduate students often have a final-year dissertation as a significant part of their assessment, and may have an oral exam or viva testing their grasp of what is presented in their dissertations. Sizes vary, but are usually less than a ‘thesis’, such as for Masters or Doctorate awards.
E-assessment	e-assessment is the use of information technology for any assessment-related activity, in particular where evidence of achievement of learning is submitted electronically for assessment. This definition embraces a wide range of student activity ranging from the use of a word processor to on-screen testing. Due to its obvious similarity to e-learning, the term e-assessment is becoming widely used as a generic term to describe the use of computers within the assessment process.
E-portfolio	An electronically-based portfolio, i.e. a file store and information management system which is modelled on the working method used for paper portfolios, but which takes advantage of allowing learners to store digital artefacts (video clips, sound files, text documents and so on) and allowing processes of review and moderation for learners, tutors, moderators and verifiers. Note: within e-assessment, e-portfolios are generally related to a particular course over a particular period of time, and designed for assessment purposes. However, in other settings portfolios may also or alternately be a “complete learning life record”, where students have access to their records, digital repository, feedback

## Leeds Met ASSIMILATE Glossary

Term	Meaning
	and reflection, aiding students to achieve a greater understanding of their individual growth, career planning and CV building.
Essay	This remains one of the most common assessment formats, and is essentially a piece of written work. Essays in exams are normally handwritten, while coursework essays are normally expected to be word-processed, and often required to be submitted electronically, not least so that plagiarism-detection software can be applied to them. Coursework essays usually have the length suggested in terms of word-count, for example 3000 words. Essays can be literary criticism, political manifestos, learned arguments, observations of daily life, recollections, and reflections of the author. The definition of an essay is vague, overlapping with those of an article and a short story. Research shows that essays are notoriously unreliable as assessment components – in other words different markers will often award the same essay very different marks.
Evaluation	In the UK, evaluation normally means gathering feedback from students about their experience of courses, analysing this feedback, and improving the course design as a result of the feedback. In the US, the word 'evaluation' is used for what we in the UK refer to as 'assessment'. Other countries follow one or other of these ways of using the words, which makes some literature confusing, so it's worth checking exactly what authors really mean by these words quite early when reading work from a new source.
External assessor	This is an assessor from outside the department setting the assessment concerned. External assessors may be from another institution, or another department in the same institution, or can be professional practitioners in commerce or industry. The purpose of an external assessor may be to provide an additional assessment of students' work, to complement the assessment judgements of internal assessors. Where an external assessor has more responsibility for overseeing the overall conduct and quality of assessment, the term 'external examiner' is more often used, though both terms are sometimes used interchangeably.
Formative assessment	Normally this term is used for assessment where the main purpose is to provide feedback to students, so they can build on their strengths, and address their weaknesses in future work. Sometimes the term is used for work which does not count towards overall assessment, but more often the marks gained for formative tasks contribute towards overall assessment, along with summative or end-point assessment elements such as exams.
Group Assessment	This usually refers to the assessment of the work of two or more students working together, as opposed to individual assessment of each student. The assessment can relate to the overall product of the group (for example a group presentation, or a report or written product assembled jointly by the group). Group assessment may also include attempts to assess the relative contributions made by each member of the group to the overall product. The most often reported difficulty with group assessment is ensuring that individual contribution is addressed properly, in other words ensuring that 'passengers' are discouraged.
Holistic assessment	This normally refers to the overall assessment of a piece of work, performance or presentation, rather than point by point assessment of individual components of the work. For example, sometimes the overall product is considered to be more than the sum of its parts,

## Leeds Met ASSIMILATE Glossary

Term	Meaning
	and so the quality of a final product or performance is evaluated rather than adding up the individual elements of the assessment.
Inter-assessor reliability	This is about the level of consistency or fairness that is achieved when more than one assessor grades the work. Double-marking gives a first approximation of reliability here, but only when it is 'blind', in other words when the 2 <sup>nd</sup> assessor does not know the grades awarded by the 1 <sup>st</sup> assessor, and so on.
Intra-assessor reliability	This is about the level of consistency or fairness achieved by an individual assessor while marking a batch of students' work. Intra-assessor reliability can be compromised if the assessor is too 'hard' (or too 'lenient') when marking the first few scripts, in other words while 'getting into their stride' regarding marking the particular element of work concerned.
Ipsative	Ipsative assessment is the practice of assessing present performance against the prior performance of the person being assessed. It can be regarded as a deliberate way of achieving student-centred assessment. This is useful in contexts where it is important to help each learner to develop, rather than just to assess learners against set criteria.
Learning Objective	A statement of what the learners will be expected to do when they have completed a specified part of a course or module. It is more or less the same as what we nowadays mean by an 'intended learning outcome'.
Learning Objects	A learning object is a resource, usually digital and web-based, that can be used and re-used to support learning. Learning objects are usually much smaller than a traditional "several hour chunk" of teaching or learning, and provide smaller, self-contained, re-usable units of learning. They normally provide subject content or information, along with learning-by-doing, and automated assessment, along with feedback to learners. The term is often used for a 'bite-sized' element of e-learning, which can be adapted for usage in different contexts and subjects.
Learning outcome	A statement of the skills, understanding or knowledge that learner is expected to have as a result of a learning process, usually expressed in terms of what evidence of achievement the learner should be able to show at the end of a given piece of learning.
Learning sets	A learning set is group of learners who meet either on their own or with a tutor, to learn collaboratively, and deepen their learning by explaining things to each other, and giving each other feedback on their learning.
Marking scheme	A marking scheme is a set of criteria used in assessing student' work, with details of how many marks are awarded for each particular aspect of their work. A good marking scheme helps ensure assessment reliability, and helps different markers see whether they are achieving inter-assessor reliability (in other words, giving the same marks to the same pieces of work). Marking schemes are very useful to candidates, so they can see how much credit is associated with particular aspects of their work, or which assessment criteria 'count' more than others.
Metadata	Reference data about a piece of information (e.g. an assessment item) that enables it to be systematically stored in and retrieved from a database (e.g. an item bank) according to a variety of selection criteria. In the context of assessment, metadata might typically refer to aspects such as qualification or test specifications, curriculum content and performance statistics.

## Leeds Met ASSIMILATE Glossary

Term	Meaning
MLE	Managed Learning Environment: a term which can be used for many different learning situations, for example lectures and tutorials managed by tutors, where the nature and rate of learning is controlled by the tutor.
Moderation	The process of checking that assessment criteria and standards have been applied correctly and consistently between assessors, or between different institutions, and over time, making adjustments to results where required to compensate for any differences in standard that are encountered. Moderation normally involves reviewing the work of a representative sample of candidates, for example at least 10 when the group size is 100 – often the square root of the total number is taken as a basis for deciding the number to be moderated. Often, moderation is also applied to any candidates whose work lies on or close to a significant borderline, for example 1 <sup>st</sup> -class and 2:1 or ‘merit’ and ‘distinction’.
MOODLE	Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment is a free and open-source e-learning software platform, used in the UK more often in further education institutions than in universities, which tend to choose to use a selected commercial platform such as WebCT, Blackboard, X-stream, and so on..
Multiple choice questions (MCQ)	This is a widely used form of objective testing, where candidates are given a series of questions, each of which involved selecting the ‘best’ or ‘correct’ option from (typically) four or five alternatives. The common part of the question preceding the options is called the ‘stem’, the correct option is called the ‘key’, and the remaining options are called ‘distractors’. This sort of test can be done on paper, and marked manually, or on special optically-readable cards, and marked by machine, or directly onto a computer or network, and marked electronically. Computer-based and online multiple-choice testing has the advantage that candidates can be given on-screen feedback responses to each choice they make, either instantly, or at the end of the test. Computer software can record scores, analyse the performance of the test items themselves, and assemble results for printing.
Multiple response questions	These are similar to multiple choice questions (see above), except that candidates are asked to select ‘one or more’ of the options. In other words, more than one option may be correct. These questions are slightly more sophisticated than MCQs, in that once candidates have ‘spotted’ the ‘best’ option, they still need to look at the other options to check out whether any more can be regarded as ‘correct’ too.
Norm referenced testing	This is where only a given proportion of the candidates can be awarded a ‘top’ grade (e.g. a 1 <sup>st</sup> class degree, or a ‘distinction’), rather than everyone who presents excellent work gets the top grade – and so on. It is a type of test, assessment, or evaluation which yields an estimate of the position of the tested individual in a predefined population, with respect to the trait being measured. Norm referencing is widely regarded as less fair than criterion referencing, but is still widely practised!
Open book exams	Similar to a traditional exam, but students are allowed access to sources of reference materials, for example textbooks or source books. Sometimes the ‘open books’ consist of one or more ‘allowed’ texts, so that no students are advantaged by having more books than others. The allowed texts may be brought in by the

## Leeds Met ASSIMILATE Glossary

Term	Meaning
	students, or (better) issued in the exam, to prevent students marking-up their own copies of the books with additional information.
Open notes exams	This is similar to traditional exams, but where students are allowed to take in their own notes to help them. Sometimes the amount of notes (e.g. number of pages) may be specified (but students can of course use a very small font size to print a great deal of information on a few pages, if they so choose). Sometimes the 'open notes' are collected along with the exam scripts, as additional material which may help in the marking of the scripts.
Oral Assessment	This is normally face-to-face assessment, where a candidate is asked questions by two or more tutors, who can probe the depth of knowledge being shown by the candidate. Also, the term oral assessment can relate to where students give presentations about their work, or about set tasks, individually or in groups, and marks or grades are awarded for the quality of the presentations and the depth of knowledge demonstrated. In Masters or PhD study, there is usually an oral examination of the submitted thesis as the main assessment associated with the award.
OSCEs	Objective Structured Clinical Examinations: these are simulated real-life scenarios used to assess medical and nursing students, for example simulated doctor-patient encounters, interpretation of patient records or X-rays, and a wide range of other elements designed to test a range of clinical skills. The individual test elements are often timed – e.g. five minutes at each 'assessment station' around a large hall. Several other disciplines are now designing parallel kinds of assessment, to increase the overall authenticity and validity of assessment.
Pedagogy	A term for the overall field of teaching, learning and assessment, including what is taught, how teaching occurs, how learning occurs, the design of curriculum, assessment design, feedback and so on. The term started in the context of learning by children, but is now used for education design relating to any age.
Peer Assessment	Peer assessment involves students assessing the work or performance of other students, getting them to make informed judgements on others' evidence of achievement. Peer assessment can be used for essays, reports, answers to problems sheets, presentations, and just about any form of assessment. It is also often appropriate in assessing group work, and is particularly valuable if both product and process are peer-assessed.
Performance-based assessment	It could be argued that most kinds of assessment boil down to performance-based assessment, for example exams measure how well candidates perform under exam conditions. The term is nowadays mostly used where there is an element of live performance being assessed, for example dance, music, practical activity, physical activity, and so on.
Plagiarism	The intentional use of other people's work (their words, products or ideas) for personal advantage without proper acknowledgement of the original work. Universities regard plagiarism very seriously, and candidates found to have committed the offence are often disqualified from <i>all</i> the assessments for that year, or asked to leave the institution altogether. Plagiarism can indeed occur deliberately (with the intention to cheat or deceive) but may also occur accidentally (for example due to poor referencing, or due to differences in culture regarding 'honouring teachers' by directly

## Leeds Met ASSIMILATE Glossary

Term	Meaning
	using their words), but accidental plagiarism is normally regarded just as seriously as intentional plagiarism.
Portfolio	Typically, portfolios are compilations of evidence of students' achievements, including major pieces of their work, feedback comments from tutors and reflective analyses by the students themselves. Sometimes the specification of portfolios is divided into 'primary evidence' (key things written by the students themselves) and 'secondary evidence' (a collection of indexed appendices) to substantiate things included in the primary evidence.
Practical assessment	This may occur in laboratories or studios, where students are observed doing practical work, as well as submitting for assessment the product of the work, or the analysis of the results of the work.
Presentation	Presentation is the practice of preparing, presenting and explaining a topic to an audience, usually including a tutor. Some marks are usually set aside for how well the presenter handles questions from the audience or the tutor. Presentations lend themselves to peer-assessment, especially when the student group has been involved in identifying and weighting the criteria for the assessment of the presentations.
Problem based learning	Problem-based learning (PBL) is a student-centered instructional strategy in which students learn by solving problems individually or collaboratively and reflecting upon their experiences. Students may each be set different problems to address, or groups of students set particular problems to address, or even individuals and groups can be asked to identify problems to address, then work towards their solution, and produce evidence of achievement about how they went about reaching solutions to the problems. The University of Aalborg in Denmark has an institution-wide approach to use problem based learning as the principle way of getting students learning.
Quality assurance	This term is used to describe the processes used by universities (and other institutions) to monitor and guarantee the standards of assessment (and many other factors). It included oversight of the gathering of feedback from students, and from external examiners on assessment, and checking to ensure that recommendations from external examiners are addressed by course teams.
Reliability	This is about fairness and consistency of assessment. It can refer to the extent to which a test's results are repeatable and fair from one candidate to the next, and from one occasion to the next (for example with a different set of candidates). i.e. a measure of the accuracy of the score achieved, with respect to the likelihood that the score would be constant if the test were re-taken or the same performance were rescored by another marker, or if another test from a test bank of ostensibly equivalent items is used. Many factors affect the reliability of an assessment. Ambiguous instructions to candidates can make an assessment unreliable since candidates may be unclear about what it is they are required to do. Badly worded questions may be interpreted differently by different candidates or even by the same candidate on different occasions. Vague marking instructions may result in different markers awarding marks for different reasons or the same marker awarding marks inconsistently between candidates. Assessment formats which are notably unreliable include essays, dissertations and portfolios, where different markers may award very different

## Leeds Met ASSIMILATE Glossary

Term	Meaning
	marks or grade for a particular example.
Rubric	A set of instructions for the candidate provided as the preamble to an assessment. This may include information about how many marks go with each part of the assessment, the time limit (if any), the submission deadline (if any) and other guidance to the candidates regarding how they are expected to go about undertaking the assessment.
Self Assessment	Self-assessment in an educational setting involves students making judgments about their own work. Assessment decisions can be made by students on their own essays, reports, projects, presentations, performances, dissertations, and even exam scripts. Self-assessment can be extremely valuable in helping students to critique their own work, and form judgments about its strengths and weaknesses. For obvious reasons, self-assessment is more usually used as part of a formative assessment process, rather than a summative one, where it requires certification or moderation by others.
Standardised test	A standardized test is a test designed in such a way that the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent and are administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner. The principal aim is to ensure test reliability – fairness and consistency.
Structured exam	A structured exam may include multiple choice, short-answer, and several other types of questions in which students are not required to write 'full' answers to open-ended questions. The reliability (fairness, consistency) of structured exams tends to be much better than when questions are open-ended, and marking can be much quicker and easier.
Subjective test	This is where the decision about how well the assessment has been done is very much a matter of the opinion of the assessor, rather than a judgement about how well (or otherwise) candidates have demonstrated carefully identified aspects of what is expected of them. Where different assessors have very different opinions, the assessment can be unreliable.
Summative assessment	An assessment generally undertaken at the end of a learning activity or programme of learning which is used to make a judgment on the candidate's overall achievement. A key purpose of summative assessment is to record, and often grade, the candidate's performance in relation to the stated learning objectives of the programme. The only feedback that candidates usually get is the mark or grade they are awarded, and they may know little about where they lost marks, or demonstrated strengths. It can be argued that because formative feedback is so important to aid learning, there is far too much summative assessment in systems in various parts of the world, not least the UK.
Thesis	A thesis is a relatively extended document submitted in support of candidature for a degree or professional qualification presenting the author's research, findings, and reviews of relevant scholarly literature. A thesis is normally required for the award of Masters degrees or PhDs, and is further tested by candidates' performance at a viva (oral exam) with internal assessors and (usually) and external examiner. The size and structure of a thesis may be set, e.g. perhaps 100000 words for a PhD and so on. It is normally expected that the quality of work in a successful thesis will be 'publishable', and/or that the thesis should be made available in the

## Leeds Met ASSIMILATE Glossary

Term	Meaning
	library of the institution after the award of the degree.
Time constrained	An exam or other assessment form with a set time limit. "Against the clock". Candidates normally know the time limit in advance, and need to structure their work so as not to run out of time! Traditional written exams are usually time-constrained.
Unseen	An exam or other work where the candidates have not seen the questions to be answered before the assessment begins. This remains the case in many traditional exams. Skills of 'question spotting' come into play in preparing successfully for 'unseen' assessments.
Validity	The extent to which an assessment measures the actual abilities in the candidate that it is supposed to test. The key question underpinning validity is 'is this the best possible way of measuring candidates evidence of achievement of the intended learning outcomes?' For example, a written account of how to drive would be far less valid than an actual driving test. But the driving test only measures the candidates ability to drive on one occasion (if successful), and still does not mean that the candidate is an accomplished driver.
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	A set of learning and teaching tools based on networked computer resources which provide a focus for students' learning activities and their management and facilitation, along with the provision of content and resources required to help make the activities successful. The functions considered standard in a VLE are curriculum mapping, student tracking, communications tools, tutor and student support, assessment and learning delivery tools. VLE is sometimes used interchangeably with MLE (managed learning environment) but an MLE can also be defined as comprising the complete learning environment, including a VLE and offline elements.
Viva, or Viva Voce	A term used for oral assessment, or oral exams. Often termed assessment 'vivas'. Viva Voce is an Italian term meaning "with living voice". It is an oral assessment in which the students answers questions in an interview with one or more examiner, as normally happens at the culmination of PhD or Masters studies. Vivas are also commonly used to determine whether borderline candidates (e.g. between a 1 <sup>st</sup> and a 2.1) should go up or down regarding the borderline, or to sample mid-category learners to establish or confirm the nature of performance associated with each category. Vivas are also sometimes used to investigate whether plagiarism may have occurred, questioning candidates about their work to check that it is indeed their own work.
Work based learning	This refers to learning done on work placements, for example in commerce, industry or other professional settings. The assessment of work based learning can take many forms. Some assessment may be done back in the university concerned, but other contributions to the overall assessment may arise from judgements made by supervisors at the workplace, and may be based on evidence assembled by students as they undertake their placements.