



# ASSESSMENT IN FOCUS

St. Mary's University  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Bi-annual Publication of the Testing Center  
Volume VII, No. 1 February 2017.

**Assessment in Focus is dedicated to the dissemination of information and developments at the Testing Center, as well as to shed light on aspects of educational measurement and evaluation issues that would assist in the development and maintenance of up-to-standard and quality education at SMU, and at similar higher learning institutions in Ethiopia.**

## Editor's Note

Assessment in Focus is a biannual newsletter dedicated to give highlights on educational matters and the current activities at the Testing Center. In addition it represents relevant articles which are meant to be the concern of stakeholders and the entire community of St. Mary's University in general. These are trainings and employment tests provided for the customers. The other issue is a nationwide academic cheating for which different solutions are being tried to minimize it. Besides a number of important terminologies professionally discussed, 10 principles of academic integrity are suggested for curbing academic cheating.

The next issue is the explanation given to make clear the disparity between the two educational jargons, namely: pedagogy and andragogy. The other educational issue is about Public or National Examination which gives details of how it started and developed. In the case of teaching, it is quite praiseworthy that innovations are prevailing in every aspect: science and technology, research, measurement and evaluation and others. As an example, Bloom's Taxonomy, which has been in action for years, has now been revised as a result of which trainings have been given to the concerned bodies at St. Mary's University.

As far as teaching is concerned, whatever education is provided, it goes through the use of languages. Concerning this, there are evidences that English language plays a pivotal role in providing education for the society, especially, the school children at large. The other article in this issue talks a lot about student handling by establishing smooth relation as a good prac-

tice at undergraduate level in university setting. Regarding this, different scholars cite seven principles to be exercised at this level.

Next to the last is the most entertaining piece of writing "The Wayside Chapel" which, if we happen to read it repeatedly, would seem a new writing every time. Therefore, the editorial group would like to advise readers to have a look at every piece we have presented here in. The last part of the newsletter presents selected quotes which offer useful thoughts that have educational value.

Good read.

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## Activities at the Testing Center

Different activities have been carried out by the Testing Center over the last few months.

### Improving Student Recruitment

- Entrance Exams were prepared and administered on the basis of the Ministry of Education guideline to applicants from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to join the degree program for 2016/17 G.C, and to the College of Open and Distance Learning (CODL) and St. Mary's University (SMU) undergraduate fields of study.

### Enhancing the Quality of Teaching and Student Experience

- Notes were prepared on Criterion – Referenced Assessment technique for Regular Program and on cheating for CODL, and posted for students on SMU online system.

### Improving the Quality of Assessment Tools

- Nineteen major courses for the Regular Degree Program of 2016/17 G.C. 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester were analyzed, conducted and reports were provided to instructors of five departments and the Office of the Vice President. The reports and discussions were aimed at enabling instructors to identify the strong and weak points observed on the development of assessment instruments, and taking the necessary measures to standardize the assessment processes.
- Ten Comprehensive Degree Exams (CDEEs) for CODL, and one for Regular Program were prepared and administered to graduating students. At St. Mary's University, undergraduate students will not be awarded degrees if they fail in CDEE of their respective fields.

### Improving Outreach Services

Outreach Services need to be improved, and implemented in a way that larger parts of the society

are reached. In this sense, Testing Center (TC) provides employment and placement testing services for applicants by highly qualified and experienced professionals in diverse fields of study.

- Two employment tests were prepared and administered to the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association, of which 5 competed for the position of executive secretary and 7 for the Chamber's Academic Director.
- Written English language and computer performance practical tests were given to 27 candidates of Ambo Mineral Water S.c.
- Written and practical tests on system administration were given to 8 candidates of Abay Bank S.c.
- Nineteen Test sessions for Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and 8 Test sessions for Graduate Record Examination (GRE) were conducted in Lab A and B for a total of 270 candidates. TOEFL and GRE are among international Internet- Based Tests given at SMU to enable international students to join universities abroad.

### Provision of Trainings

Short-term training services on educational measurement and evaluation were provided by professionals to SMU and outside customers.

- Trainings were conducted on Test Blueprint, Item Development, Assessment, Scoring & Evaluation and Criterion-Referenced Assessment implementation to instructors of SMU at Mexico Campus, and TC for newly employed academic staff on Item Development and Test Blueprint preparation during the first quarter of 2016/17.
- SMU provides training assistance on educational assessment for to schools/organizations. In this regard, the Center gave a half day training to





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26 academic staff of Beteseb Academy on Test Blueprint, Item Development and Item Analysis, on November 12, 2016.



Receiving certificate after training session.

- To update the practices of computer technology, trainings were given to Testing Center support staffs on hardware networking, G - mail account creation, network trouble shooting, printer and hard drive sharing, antivirus downloading and uploading, tutorial book downloading and disk cleaning up for 6 sessions (6 days) in December , 2016.



Trouble shooting session.

- Training was conducted on handling exam anxiety and good study habit for 147 under graduate first year students and the materials uploaded on SMU online system.
- Trainings were given to 21 Grade 8, 10 and 12 teachers of Kidist Mariam Schools on Test Blueprint preparation and Item Development at Gerji Campus. Further, they were given

assistance for the preparation of 28 Model Exams of Grade 8, 10 and 12. In addition, short time practical training was given to 4 secretaries of Kidist Mariam School on writing standard exams at the Testing Center.

### Academic Cheating (Malpractice)

By Dr. Wubishet Shiferaw, Testing Center, SMU

A variety of terms such as malpractice, misconduct, cheating etc... describe practices that would interfere with the integrity of examination. Any prescribed action taken in connection with an examination that attempts to gain unfair advantage or, in some cases, to place a candidate at a disadvantage is a malpractice. The action might be taken by an exam candidate, a teacher, invigilator, authority, staff member or anyone with an interest in the performance of a candidate.

Malpractice may occur at any stage in the exam process i.e. item development, preparation of students, administration of exams, marking and issuance of results (Angom, 1990; Pido, 1994).

Nowadays, malpractice has become a prevalent social phenomenon among students which results in a bad influence to the quality of education, to the healthy growth of students. To solve this problem, it is necessary to identify the causes before trying to get rid of it.

David et al. (1992) point out that pressure for good grades, student stress, in effective deterrents, teacher's attitudes, and an increasing lack of academic integrity are important determinants of cheating.

Similar conclusions are reported from several investigations that inadequacies in the examinations, poor teacher performance, high difficulty level of exams, inadequate teaching, lack of textbooks, poor physical conditions and chronic absences of teachers may lead students in malpractice.

Classroom's that emphasize grades and test scores



may also drive students to cheat. When exam results are used for competitive purposes and can have a profound and immediate impact on course of examinee's life, such situation may encourage students to cheat.

Inadequate preparation of students for exams, lack of time to study, a wish to help a friend, laziness and stress are other situational factors that drive student's malpractice.

In general, causes of cheating can be grouped / organized as external and individual personal factors. External factors mainly refer to problems of test item development, test administration, badly organized course, economic benefit etc. Personal factors refer to laziness, low grades, failure, expectation to success, a version to teacher wish to social acceptance, wish to help a friend, dishonest behavior etc. Baird (1980), Daris et al. (1992) and Helherington & Feldman (1964).

Academic dishonesty is a social problem since it involves future generation. Since control of exam malpractice is a never – ending battle, institutions should always strive to devise new ways and means to control and prevent this serious problem.

Students' moral behavior and ethical reasoning should be developed under continuous education. This influence can be made stronger through an open ethical dialog with students as every teacher's concern.

Teachers should regard cheating as wrong practice. Teaching students high ethical and moral standards are of strategic importance to start the process of moral development, if "academic freedom" is to be the reality in the future. Daris and Ludvigson (1995) point out that cheating can be reduced by using positive reinforcement and by encouraging and fostering the students to acquire an outlook that will prevent from cheating.

In this regard, teachers should give enough attention to the affective domain of educational objectives,

besides promoting knowledge and skills. The training and education offered should contribute towards the development of student's positive attitude, conviction, character and behavior as part of their personality.

According to Anderman et al. (1998), creating a good socio-moral environment for the moral development of students is necessary in their professional activities as well as in their everyday life out of which society will benefit or suffer in the long run. Similarly, external factors that seem to cause cheating could be reduced through course supervision, in studying techniques and discipline, as well as better coordination of courses and exams among the academic staff.

Procedures to standardize the conditions under which examinations are prepared, administered and scored are necessary to minimize the malpractices. If procedures are successfully implemented, the integrity of exams could be maintained so that no candidate is placed at an advantage or disadvantage relative to other candidates because of unfair practice, Goldstein and Lews (1996).

Seriously checking the rules and regulations followed by all concerned bodies and taking the necessary corrective measures against any academic dishonest could also contribute to minimize the problem.

Regarding the management of cheating in the classroom, the research of Mc Cabe et al. (1997) suggests the following 10 principles of academic integrity for faculty:

1. Affirm the importance of academic integrity;
2. Foster a love of learning and informant of trust;
3. Treat students as an end in themselves;
4. Foster an environment of trust in the classroom;
5. Encourage student responsibility for academic integrity;



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6. Clarify expectations for students;
7. Develop fair and relevant forms of assessment;
8. Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty;
9. Challenge academic dishonesty when it occurs, and
10. Help define and support campus-wide academic integrity standards.

Note. From McCabe et al. (2001).

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## Pedagogy and Andragogy: Differences and Relationships

### By Denisew Liramu, Testing Center, SMU

The two major approaches of instructional methodologies-pedagogy and andragogy are practiced in different societal stages based on the development of education and training systems. The term pedagogy is derived from two Greek words *Paid*-meaning “child” and *agogus*-meaning “leader of” which literally means the art and science of teaching children. The roots of pedagogy can be traced back to seventh century during the introduction of organized education of monastic schools in Europe (Knowles, 1998).

In contrast to pedagogy, the first historic use of the term ‘andragogy’ was created by the German educationalist-Alexander Kapp in 1833, which means the art and science of helping adults to learn. He argues that self-reflection, intrinsic motivation and higher self-efficacy is the purpose of human life and learning happens not only through instructors but also through life experience (Reischmann,

2011). In 1968, Malcolm S. Knowles developed the theory of andragogy by expanding the work of Lindeman (1926), and others based on a rapid development of adult education. Both pedagogy and andragogy have different assumptions (premises) used as a foundation which make a major impact on the design of educational model.

### Basic Assumptions of Pedagogy

The first pedagogical assumption was the *dependent personality* of the learner. This implied that the learner couldn’t know his/her own learning needs. The second assumption was that learning needed to be *subject-centered*. The third assumption emphasized an *extrinsic motivation* as the important deriving force for learning. The last foundational assumption of pedagogy was, the *prior experience of the learner was irrelevant*, which considers the learner’s mind as a blank slate to be filled by information passed from the teacher (ibid).

Later, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as secular and public schools emerged in large numbers, pedagogy was readily adapted because it was the only existing educational model at the time. It should be noted that it is fundamentally a teacher-centered model, where the teacher determines what will be learned, how it will be learned and when it will be learned (Lindeman, 1926).

### Basic Assumptions of Andragogy

Beginning in 1959, Malcolm Knowles and other educators developed new andragogical assumptions about adult learners.

- I. *The need to know*: Adults need to know the utility and value of the material that they are learning before embarking on learning. As Tough (1979) emphasized in his study entitled-Adult’s Learning Projects, that when adults undertake to learn something on their own, they invest considerable energy probing into the benefits they will gain from learning and the negative consequences of not learning it (Tough, 1979).





- II. *The Learners' Self-concept*: This indicates that adult learners are self-directed and autonomous. They have a deep psychological need to be seen and to be treated by others as being capable of self-direction. They do not want to be treated as children (Knowles, 1998).
- III. *The Role of Experience*: This premise of adult learning deals with the role of the learner's prior experience. Adults tend to come into adult education activities with a greater volume and higher quality of experience than children do. This is why adult learning theories tend to employ experimental techniques such as simulation exercises, problem solving, case study, laboratory methods and group discussion.
- IV. *Readiness to Learn*: Adult learners tend to become ready to learn things that they believe and need to know or be able to do in order to cope effectively with real life situation and problems.
- V. *Orientation to Learning*: Adult learning theory is of the view that, an adult's orientation to learning is problem-centered or task-centered. Adults learn best when new knowledge skills and attitude are presented in the context of real life situations.
- VI. *Motivation*: This premise of andragogy addresses the motivation or an internal willingness of adult learners. While adults are responsive to extrinsic motivational factors, they are most driven by internal pressure and desire for self-esteem and goal attainment (Knowles, 1980).

To sum up, as Tough (1982) emphasized, one may conclude that pedagogy and andragogy are opposed to each other, but in fact, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive paradigms. It should be noted that andragogy accepts the characteristics of pedagogy in some instances. For example, adult learning practitioners believe that pedagogy is a suitable approach where adult learners are truly dependent and have no relevant prior experiences.

Thus, an individual who is learning to fly an airplane for the first time with no prior aviation experience can be viewed as a dependent learner. In such a circumstance, it is more appropriate to employ the pedagogical approach to adult learners and help them gradually move from the dependency of pedagogy toward increasing autonomy (andragogy) through the process of training (Tough, 1982).

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## National/Public Examination

### By Adugnaw Alamneh, CEIQA, SMU

Examinations have been with us for a long time, at least a thousand years or more, if we think of the use made of them in Imperial China to select the highest officials of the land. Even in modern times, examinations used to select candidates for education and for employment date back at least three hundred years (Max and Harlod) in Greany and Thomas (1995). The origin of public examination is to be found in the school entrance and civil service examination of China, which goes back at least to the period of the Sui Emperors (589-618) (with a prehistory going back much further) and which achieved their most complex form towards the end of Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911) (Miyozaki, 1976 in Greany and Thomas, 1995). Inspired by the Chinese systems, examinations in written format began to appear in European schools in the 16 Century. However, it was not until some two hundred years later that public examinations of the type found in China were instituted in Europe for selection to universities, the civil service and the professions (Greany and Thomas, 1995). Public examinations are



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### The Need for National Examination

now a major feature, which in turn, passed them on to their former Colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, where they still flourish (Kelloghan, 1992).

The United States, with some exceptions (e.g. the Regents' examinations in New York), has so far not adopted a public examination system. However, during the 1980s and 1990s, a number of proposals contained in reform reports, policy statements, and legislation have advocated a national system or systems of examinations for the country. Although, there is a considerable variation in the form that is whether the examination are multiple choice type, or essay, type and the like and administration of examinations from country to country (Greany and Thomas, 1995) they generally share a number of characteristics.

National examinations according to (Greany and Thomas, 1995) are intended to serve a number of functions. The most obvious is to assess the competence of students' learning, relative to some agreed standards. The results are then frequently used to discriminate among students with regard to their preferred futures; further education, admission to professional preparation, or employment. While certification is important, particularly for students who are leaving the educational system, there is often a danger of losing sight of this function because of the strong emphasis on selection. Examination results are also often used, formally or informally, to provide evidence of school effectiveness, and schools, and teachers may be held accountable for their students' achievements as reflected in examination performance.

Any proposed national examination must be part of a broader plan-a plan that also integrates objectives, standards, teaching, assessment, and accountability for results (Davey, 1992). In many countries, there is a public examination at the three points in the system ( Greany and Thomas, 1995). The first is held at the end of the primary school and is used to identify the students that will proceed to secondary education. The second public examination is usually held three years after entry to secondary school when the cohort is further reduced, though not as drastically as at the end of primary schooling. The final examination takes place at the end of secondary schooling, at which stage students compete for university entrance. .

There are so many general justifications for concern with these examinations in contemporary society. As economic and social life becomes more formalized and bureaucratized, schools are drawn to fit their procedures to the surrounding society (Noah and Max, 1992:5). Certificates of completion of a course of study become valuable places of property, and examinations are a way to ensure that such certificates reflect degrees of learning, rather than simply attendance.

A major feature of European national examinations systems has been their function in selection for universities. In the European communities, most countries have a tradition of external examinations and these examinations are generally a feature of secondary education (Madaus, 1991). Examination can serve to motivate teachers and students, stimulating teaching and learning efforts by specifying in detail the system's expectations of students' learning. According to Noah and Max, (1992:6-14) eight national systems (Japan, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the former Soviet Union, England and Wales, Sweden, China and the United States) have been selected and presented because each illustrates at least one important feature of the relationship among examinations, schooling, and society.

Japanese society and schooling place extraordinary emphasis on scholastic success, as measured by examinations. French invented the device of a certificate gained through national, non-competitive examination and designed to be both the necessary and sufficient condition for entry into higher education.

Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) offers a major variant on the basic French model, which has relied so heavily on standardization and control from Paris to maintain academic standards. The certificate serves both as evidence of completion of academic secondary school, and as an entitlement of entrance to higher education like ESLCE.

The former Soviet Union combines features of the German, French, and Japanese approaches to high school completion examinations. A substantial degree of local administration of the examination provides the parallel with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG); as in





France, there is a strong framework of central directives; and as in Japan, applicants for higher education admission must compete in a second stage entrance examination specially arranged by individual institutions.

England and Wales present a set of secondary school completion examinations and higher education admission procedures quite unlike those of other Western European Countries. In England and Wales, the college or even the academic department chooses the students it wants, on the basis of criteria for itself.

On the basis of tests sent out from the Swedish National Board of Education, it is mandatory in the final years of secondary school just like National Organization for Examinations. The People's Republic of China is the birthplace of the first and most influential of all examination systems, by means of which individuals were selected for high office and public responsibility.

To improve educational efficiency and quality, the Chinese government has reintroduced examinations as a means of rationalizing the distribution of scarce resources. A subsequent examination at the end of upper secondary school determines university entrance standards of passing are very much influenced by availability of places, and quotas are related to overall plans for institutional and economic development. It is true in Ethiopia that standards of passing are very much influenced by the availability of places.

The United States of America has no official national system of examinations at the point of graduation from high school. Regulation of requirements for graduation is largely in the hands of the education authorities of the 50 states, and difference among the states in their minimum requirements can be quite substantial. Only a few states (notably New York and California) provide national examinations to validate the award of a high school graduation certificate. What the USA lacks in terms of official national examinations is in part balanced by the development of a system of tests that are designed to assess achievement in school subjects toward the end of secondary school, as well as aptitude for college-level studies. Generally, as indicated above the 8 nations experience viewed in cross-national perspective, secondary school completion examinations share a largely common set of functions but they differ substantially in

their modes of control, clients, and implications.

As Noah and Max, (1992:18) indicated the credential gained may be both necessary and sufficient in order to proceed to further education (as in France and Germany). It may be a necessary, but not sufficient, condition (as in Japan, China and the Soviet Union). It may be neither legally necessary, nor sufficient (as in England). It may be conventionally necessary, but sufficient only for entry into some higher education institutions (especially the state colleges and universities), but not for others (as in the United States, where the high school diploma can be acquired in most school districts without formal final examination).

## **National Examination in Africa**

Examination systems in African countries, not surprisingly, have been strongly influenced by traditions in the European countries that colonized them. Following traditions that are both British and French, examinations are formal, terminal and subject-based. Countries in Francophone Africa use French "Baccalaureate" system at the end of the secondary school, while Anglophone countries have had close files with British Examining Boards (GCE).

Throughout the history of modern education in Africa, examination played an important role, serving the function of controlling the disparate elements of the system, much of which was under private management. They also played an important role in the selection of students for scarce educational and vocational positions. (Thomas Kellaghan, 1992) in Examinations: Comparative, and International studies.

Furthermore, he said that many African Countries operate three major national examinations i.e. examinations which are administered by an agency outside the school, usually a National Examinations Council, or Board, or the Ministry of Education. The first examination is administered at the end of primary schooling. Performance on this examination determines whether or not the student will proceed to a secondary school like the former Ethiopian grade 8 national examination.

## **Setting of examinations in Africa**

Three distinctively different approaches are used for writing items and setting examination questions in the



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countries reviewed. First, in a number of countries with developed national examination centers, such as Kenya, Swaziland and Mauritius, much of the work is conducted by staff members working closely with others, usually teachers. In these countries, multiple-choice is the preferred examination format. Second, in Francophone countries in general, a less formal approach is used that allows for much more direct input from teachers. In Guinea, for instance, secondary-school teachers are asked to submit topics for examination. In Rwanda and Mauritania, the minister is closely involved in the examination-setting process; concern over test security is the primary reason for the adoption of this process. Third, in some countries (Lesotho and Zambia) formal courses for examiners are organized by examination councils. In 1987, in Lesotho, Primary Certificate multiple-choice items were written by teachers and subject specialists in specially organized workshop. Final examination items were selected on the basis of their degree of discrimination and difficulty levels, and on the judgment of subject specialists. In small number of countries, the writing of items for the terminal secondary-school examination is entrusted to university personnel. In Chad and Ethiopia, items are written by staff members from the University of Chad and University of Addis Ababa, respectively (Kellaghan and Greaney, 1992).

### What Makes a Good Examination Body?

A good examination body acts not only as an evaluator of educational achievement but also takes responsibility for making good teaching and learning happen. It does this by constructing tests that have a positive backwash effect on teaching and learning, and by informing school systems what the sources of children's learning problems are. To provide high quality feedback, an examination agency should analyze the pattern of errors made in past performance, and break those patterns down to the lowest possible unit of analysis- ideally that may even be down to the level of specific questions and to the level of the individual school or classroom. However, a testing agency cannot design good test items and set up a good feedback system if it is not **efficient**, **credible** and **autonomous**.

To be **efficient**, it must produce tests on time within its budget and within its competence. To be **credible**, it

must maintain professional standards when setting and marking tests and not give away to political pressures to test in appropriately. To be **autonomous**, it must be managed as an entity separate from the Ministry of Education and be independent of public sector regulations, to hire the technical expertise necessary at competitive salary levels, and to purchase the technical equipment necessary (Eckstein, 1992:113).

### Ethiopian National Examinations

#### Grade Six National Examination

From 1942 to 1950, the educational structure was 6 + 6 i.e. six years primary and six years secondary education. From 1942 up to 1946, the directors of secondary schools had the responsibility of selecting students for their schools, because of the limited number of schools and students places. With an increasing number of schools and students, it became very difficult for each director of secondary schools to continue to select students in this way. Therefore, criteria were needed to select students for secondary schools, and to maintain similarity of standards throughout the country. Hence, the Ministry of Education (MoE) decided to administer a National Examination at the end of grade 6, and this examination was first held in 1946.

In 1950, the structure of the educational system was changed from 6 + 6 to 8 + 4, that is, eight years of primary and four years of secondary education. Consequently, Grade 6 National Examination was not administered from 1950 up to 1965, because selection was no longer required after the Grade 6 level. In 1964, the structure of the education system was changed for the third time, from 8 + 4 to 6 + 2 + 4, that is six years of primary, two years of junior secondary and four years of senior secondary education.

Therefore, Grade 6 National Examination was reintroduced in 1965, as a primary school leaving certificate. The examination was conducted from 1965 to 1991, but it has again been interrupted in 1992 and 1993, owing to the introduction of different languages as the medium of instruction in different regions of the country. The medium of instruction in primary schools up to 1991 was Amharic, but from 1992 onwards different regions started to use their own languages as the medium of instructions and it become difficult to prepare the Grade 6 National Examination in one language.





## Grade Eight National Examination

As explained above, in 1950, the educational structure was changed from six years primary and six years secondary to eight years primary and four years secondary education. At this time, after terminating the Grade 6 National Examination, the MoE introduced National examination at Grade 8 level. This examination was designed to serve the purposes of selection and placement. Students were placed in different technical and vocational schools according to their academic and aptitude test results in Grade 8 National Examination. From 1950 up to the present time, this examination has continued to be held. The examination currently serves only selection purposes. At first, it was an essay type examination, but with the increasing number of candidates, the format changed to multiple choices.

## The Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE)

The ESLCE was introduced experimentally in 1946 to students of grade 12. The University of London's General Certificate of Education Examination ordinary level (GCE) became the formal Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination (Addis Ababa University 1991). However, the GCE restricted the introduction of the changes needed to make secondary education relevant and appropriate to Ethiopian conditions particularly in history, geography and science. Even the Amharic language had to fit the GCE syllabus. Consequently, the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) was introduced on an experimental basis in 1950; however, from 1950 to 1954, it was essential for students to sit for both examinations. In 1955, the MoE decided to replace the GCE with the ESLCE. Until 1977, the format, all subject examinations, was an essay type examination. From 1977 onwards, owing to the increasing number of students, the format was changed to the use of multiple choice questions. The medium of instruction and testing remained English. There were 13 subjects grouped into seven areas. These areas were: Language I (Amharic and English), Mathematics, Commercial Mathematics, Science I (Physics and Chemistry), Science II (General Science and Biology), Social Science (History and Geography), Business (Economics and Book-keeping) and Language II (Geez and French). Between 1967 and 1974, an aptitude test was also administered. Today, the

same subjects are also administered.

## Ethiopian National Examinations Administration

When the national examination first started, they were under the control of MoE. However, around 1955 the MoE gave a mandate to the then Haile Sellassie First University (now Addis Ababa University) to administer ESLCE and the MoE has continued to administer the Grade 6 and Grade 8 National Examinations (Tilahun, 1994). Since September 1996, National Organization for Examinations (NOE) has been established to administer grades 8 and 12 national examinations. However, in 1996 and 1997, ESLCE was administered jointly with Addis Ababa University and NOE. However, running national examinations through two offices created the duplication of personnel, equipment and money. Studies indicate that the merging of the two offices within one framework would avoid these duplications. The Cambridge Educational Consultants (1988:15) stated that: It is envisaged that the setting up of a National Examinations' Agency will overcome many of the major professional and administrative difficulties, which exist at present due to duplication of effort on the part of the Ministry of Education and the Commission for Higher education. Consequently, the MoE decided to merge the two offices within one framework by establishing the 'National Organization for Examinations' (NOE), which is responsible for the development admission of all 'National Examinations at all levels leading to selection and certification.

## Past Practices of the ESLCE Office

Over the years, the number of candidates sitting for ESLCE has increased significantly. In 1949, only 66 candidates sat for the examination. After five years, in 1953, the number of candidates grew by 60.6%. After 10 years, in 1958, it grew by 512.3%. Therefore, this shows that the number of candidates has been growing significantly every year until now.

According to Mekonnen Yimer, et. al (1988), in the attempt to carry out its various activities, the ESLCE office runs into different problems which at times are frustrating. These problems are: problem related to supply of materials, space problem, research problem,



## ASSESSMENT IN FOCUS

manpower problem, test administration problem, problem of administrative structure and security. Regarding security problem, recommendation was forwarded according to the report. As the report said, the director was pleased to report that several of the difficulties that the ESLCE Office used to encounter in previous years have, to some extent, been brought under control. For instance, cases involving forgery, cheating, deliberate falsification of registration numbers, etc. are now encountered less frequently. Nonetheless, the ESLCE administration had met a few such cases during the 1967 registration and examination sessions. There was therefore, no place for complacency (satisfaction). On the contrary, it was recommended that: the university and the Ministry of Education should continue to demand for stern sanctions from the police and courts whenever such fraud (dishonesty) actions are uncovered. In addition, appropriate steps should be taken by the university and the ministry to follow those cases that have been pending in the courts for over two years.

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## Teaching with the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

By Shenkute Mamo, Testing Center, SMU

Bloom's Taxonomy is categorized in 6 classifications with increasing levels of complexity (Cruz, 2003).

Educators use Bloom's Taxonomy to plan curriculum, write and revise learning objectives, identify simple to most difficult skills, effectively align objectives to assessment techniques and standards, incorporate knowledge to be learned (knowledge dimension) and cognitive *process* to learn and facilitate questioning (oral language = important role within framework) .

Bloom's Taxonomy was originally labeled as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation levels of complexity based on noun. The Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, however, is labeled as remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating levels of complexity based on active verbs (Tarlinton, Cruz, 2003).

Under remembering, the learner is able to recall, restate and remember learned information. Describing, finding, identifying, listing, retrieving, naming, locating, recognizing etc are some of the active verbs used for describing remembering.

"Can the student recall information?" is a type question





to be asked under remembering category.

Under understanding, students grasp the meaning of information by interpreting and translating what has been learned. Classifying, comparing, exemplifying, explaining, inferring, interpreting, paraphrasing, summarizing etc. are active verbs used for describing understanding. *“Can students explain ideas or concepts?”* is a brand question to be asked under understanding category.

In the case of applying, student makes use of information in a context different from the one in which it was learned. Implementing, carrying out, using, executing etc. are some of the active verbs used for describing applying. *“Can students use the information in another familiar situation?”* is a variety question to be asked under applying category.

For analysing domain, students are expected to break learned information into its parts to best understand that information. Attributing, comparing, deconstructing, finding, integrating, organizing, outlining, structuring etc. are some of the active verbs used to describing analysing. *“Can students break information into parts to explore understandings and relationships?”* is a brand question to be asked under analysing domain.

In the case of evaluating, the student makes decisions based on an in-depth reflection, criticism and assessment. Checking, critiquing, detecting, experimenting,

hypothesising, judging, monitoring, testing etc, are some of the active verbs used to describe evaluating. *“Can students justify a decision or a course of action?”* is a type of question to be asked under evaluating category.

Under creating, student creates new ideas and information using what previously has been learned. Constructing, designing, devising, inventing, making, planning, producing etc. are some of the active verbs used for describing creating. *“Can students generate new products, ideas, or ways of viewing things?”* is a sort of question to be asked under creating category.

## Framing questions while Teaching with the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy

Lower level questions are used to assess remembering, understanding & lower level applying levels. In this regard, lower level questions evaluate students’ preparation and comprehension; diagnose students’ strengths and weaknesses and review and/or summarizing content. On the other hand, higher level questions require complex application, analysis, evaluation or creation skills and encourage students to think more deeply and critically, facilitate problem solving, encourage discussions and stimulate students to seek information on their own (Ferguson, 2002).

**The table below shows samples of question stems of the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy.**

Remembering stems	Understanding stems	Applying stems	Analyzing stems	Evaluating stems	Creating stems
What happened after...?	Explain why...	Explain another instance where...	Which events could not have happened?	Judge the value of... What do you think about...?	Design a...to...
How many...?	Write in your own words...	Group by characteristics such as...	If... happened, what might the ending have been?	Defend your position about...	Devise a possible solution to...
What is...?	How would you explain...?	Which factors would you change if...?	How is... similar to...?	Do you think... is a good or bad thing?	If you had access to all resources, how would you deal with...?
Who was it that...?	Write a brief outline...	What questions would you ask of...?	What do you see as other possible outcomes?	How would you have handled...?	Devise your own way to...



## ASSESSMENT IN FOCUS

In summary, Bloom's Revised Taxonomy is a systematic process of thinking and learning, assisting assessment efforts with an easy-to-use format, visual representation of alignment between goals and objectives with standards, activities, and outcomes helps for challenging questions to help students gain knowledge and critical thinking skills and development of goals, objectives, and lesson plans.

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## English as an International Language

By Degefa Burayou, Testing Center, SMU

Today, English is widely taught in the world that the purposes for which it is learned are sometimes taken for granted. Some years back, teaching English was a politically neutral activity and acquiring it was a "blessing" to those who succeeded in learning it, and would lead to educational and economic empowerment. In some positions, English was regarded as the property of the English-speaking world, namely: Britain and the United States. Those who considered themselves native speakers of the language had such insights and superior knowledge about teaching it. They believed that English was, above all, the tool for the expression of a rich and

advanced culture, or whose literary artifacts had universal value.

This feature has somewhat changed now. Nowadays, English is the language of globalization, international communication, commerce, trade, and media, and thus, different motivations for learning it come into play. This view indicates that English is no longer perceived as the property of the English-speaking world, but is an international commodity, sometimes referred to as World English, or English as an International Language (McKay 2002).

Here, the cultural values of Britain and the United States are seen as irrelevant to language teaching, except in situations where the learner has a practical need for such information.

In this case, the language teacher need not be an expert on British and American culture and a literature specialist as well. An educator, called Bisong (1995) explains that, in Nigeria, English is just one of a member of languages that form the speech parts of Nigerians and that they learn "English for practical reasons to do with maximizing their chances in a multilingual and multicultural society."

In many countries in the world, there are other languages that are growing fast, and are almost nearing to share the role of English due to the expansion of world trade. Among the fastest growing languages on the globe are: Spanish, Arabic, French, Mandarin Chinese, German, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, etc. Nevertheless, English is still promoted as a tool that assists with educational and economic advancement, now viewed, in many parts of the world as one that can be acquired without any cultural clothing that goes with it.

Certainly, proficiency in English is needed for employees to advance in international companies and their technical knowledge and skills. At the same time, mastery of English, as it is claimed,





enhances the power and control of a privileged few. Regarding this, critical theorists have turned their attention to the status of English and the consumption of education resources it demands in many countries, and its role in facilitating domination by multinational corporations. On the other hand, due to the dynamicity of diversities that the language of international communication will be 50 years from now remains under study.

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## Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education, Particularly of Distance Learners.

By Birhanu Abera, Testing Center, SMU

There are seven principles of good practice in undergraduate education based up on research on good teaching and learning in college setting by different scholars. These principles have been intended as a guideline for faculty members, students and administrators to follow and improve teaching – learning process. When all principles are practiced, there are six other forces in education that surface. These are: activity, expectations, cooperation, interaction, diversity and responsibility. Teachers and students have the most responsibility for improving undergraduate education. However, improvements need to be made by college and university leaders, and state and federal officials. The goals of the seven principles are to prepare students to deal with the real world as follows:

### Encouraging Contact between Students & Faculty

Building friendly relationship rapport with students is very important and vital to the students' success. One of the main reasons that students leave school is the feeling of isolation that they experience

(Pomona, 1991). The following are suggested as solutions:- trying computer conferencing, clearly communicating one's e-mail response policy, chatting having time online with faculty at various times, using pictures of faculty students, visiting the distance sites if possible, and have an onsite support person. In general, technologies like e-mail, computer conferencing, and the World Wide Web / internet gives more opportunities for students and faculty to converse.

### Developing Reciprocity and Cooperation among Students

Cooperative learning has several benefits. Students care more about their learning because of the interdependent nature of the process. Retention is higher because there is a social and intellectual aspect on the content material. Students also find the method more enjoyable, because there is no competition placed up on them. Cooperation without competition is more effective in promoting student learning (Presscott. S, 1992). In this case, it is important to let the students in the following activities:

- use chat sites and discussion forums for student communication;
- have a question and answer time online;
- use teleconferencing for idea sharing;
- team-teach courses, and
- include “ice breaker activity” to allow students to share their interest and to learn about others work on group projects through phone and e-mail.

### Encouraging Active Learning

Learning is an active process in which students are not able to learn much by only sitting in classes, listening to teachers, memorizing prepacked assignments and churning out answers.

They must be able to talk about what they are learning,



## ASSESSMENT IN FOCUS

write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. Promoting active learning in higher education is a struggle because of the learning background that students come with to the classes (Temple, 1989). This is due to the fact that the norm in our nation's secondary schools has been to promote passive learning.

Effective learning is an active learning. The concept of active learning has been applied to curriculum design, internship program, community service, laboratory science instruction, music and speech performance, seminar classes, undergraduate research, peer teaching and computer assisted learning. In this respect, the following can help to produce active learning:

- allow flexibility in choosing material so that, it is more meaningful to the learner;
- have an interactive web page;
- debate online;
- present students' work to others to review, and
- use e-mail for group problem solving etc.

### Giving Prompt Feedback

The importance of feedback is so obvious that it is often taken for granted during the teaching and learning process. It is a simple yet powerful tool to aid in the learning process. Feedback is any means to inform learners of their accomplishment and areas needing improvement. Throughout their time in college, and especially at the end of their college career, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know and how to assess themselves. Knowing what you know and do not know gives a focus to learning. In order for the students to benefit from courses, they need the appropriate feedback of their performance. These are several different forms that feedback can take. They are: oral, written, computers display,

and from any of the interactions that occur in group learning. Here, it is essential to follow the following procedures:

- use e-mail to give instant feedback instead of waiting for the next lesson;
- use online testing, software simulations and web based programs that provide instantaneous feedback;
- use pre class and post class assessments
- schedule a chat group where you and the instructors are present;
- send acknowledgement e-mails when you receive a students work, and
- post answer keys after receiving assignment from all student.

### Emphasizing Time on Task

Learning needs time and energy. Efficient time management skills are critical for students. By allowing realistic amount of time, effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty are able to occur. The way that the institution defines time expectations for students, faculty administrators and other staff can create the basis for high performance from everyone.

Student achievement is not simply a matter of the amount of time spent working on a task. Even though learning and development require time, it is a mistake to disregard how well the time is spent (Ludewing, 1992). According to Ludewing, time expectations can be achieved by designing the following:

- give an amount of time and decide what realistically can be covered;
- give up the assumption (illusion) of doing it all as you might in a regular class room;
- vary the types of interaction in a way that it



doesn't consume time;

- consider both in and out of class time;
- have regular discussions that require participation, and
- make sure you know what your goals are and that the learners understand them as well.

## Communicating High Expectation

Expect more and you will get it. The poorly prepared, those unwilling to exert themselves, and the bright and motivated, all need high expectations. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and institutions hold high standards and make extra efforts.

High expectations also include the students' performance and behavior inside and outside the classroom. To do this, the teacher can use the suggested activities to communicate high expectation. Thus:

- call attention to excellent work in bulletin board postings or class list serves;
- show examples of your expectations with previous students' work;
- publish students' work;
- be a role model to students;
- expect students to participate;
- ask students to comment on what they are doing, and
- suggest extra resources that support key points.

## Respecting Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

There are many different ways to learn and no two people learn the same way. Students bring different talents and learning styles to the classroom. Students that excel in the seminar room may be all thumbs in the lab or art studio and vice versa. Therefore, the following need to be considered to respect diverse

talents:

- encourage students to express diverse points of view in discussions;
- create learning activities filled with real life examples and diverse perspectives;
- provide Saturday lab experiences by contracting with local high schools or community colleges;
- balance classroom activities for all styles (some books, some hands on, some visual), and
- explain theory from a practical approach first, then, add the structural approach.

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## THE WAYSIDE CHAPEL

By Baye Nigatu, LRC, SMU

An English lady, while visiting Switzerland, was looking for a room for an extended stay. She contacted the local schoolmaster to ask if he could recommend any. He took her to see several rooms, and when everything was settled, the lady returned to England to make the final preparation to move. When she arrived home, the thought suddenly occurred to her that she had not seen a 'WC' (English term for water closet or toilet) in the place. So, immediately, she wrote a note to the schoolmaster asking if there was a "WC" around. The schoolmaster was a poor student of English, so, he asked the parish priest if he could help him in the matter.

Together, they tried to discover the meaning of the letters 'WC' and the only solution they could find was 'Wayside Chapel'. The schoolmaster, then, wrote the following note to the English lady.





## ASSESSMENT IN FOCUS

Dear Madam,

*I take great pleasure in informing you that the 'WC' is situated nine miles from the house in the center of a beautiful grove of pine trees. It is capable of holding 229 people and it is open on Sundays and Thursdays only. As there are a great number of people expected during the summer months, I would suggest that you arrive early, although there is always plenty of standing room. This unfortunate situation, particularly if you are in the habit of going regularly.*

*You will, no doubt, be glad to hear that a good number of people bring their own lunch and make a day of it. I would recommend your ladyship to go on Thursday when there is an organ accompaniment. The acoustics are excellent, and even the most delicate sound can be heard everywhere.*

*The newest attraction is a bell donated by a wealthy resident of the district. It rings every time a person enters. A bazaar is to be held to provide plush seats for all. My wife is rather delicate that she cannot attend regularly. It is almost a year since she went last. Naturally, it pains her very much not to be able to go more often.*

*I shall be delighted to reserve the best for you if you wish, where you will be seen by all. For children, there is a special time so that they will not disturb the elders.*

Hoping to have been of some service to you

I remain sincerely yours,

The schoolmaster.

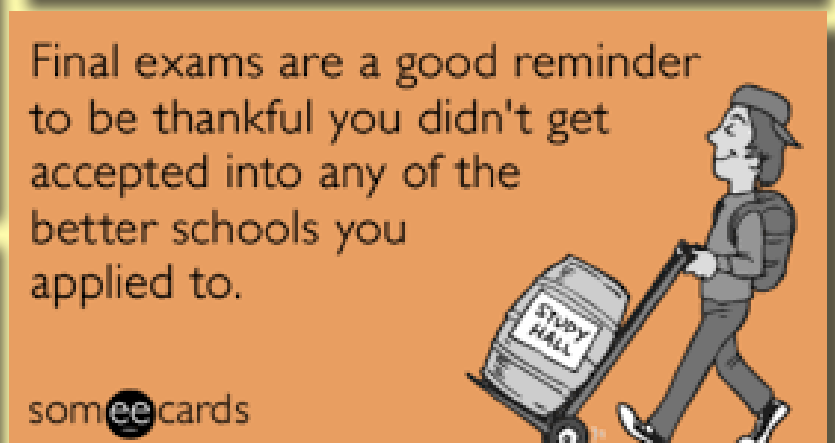
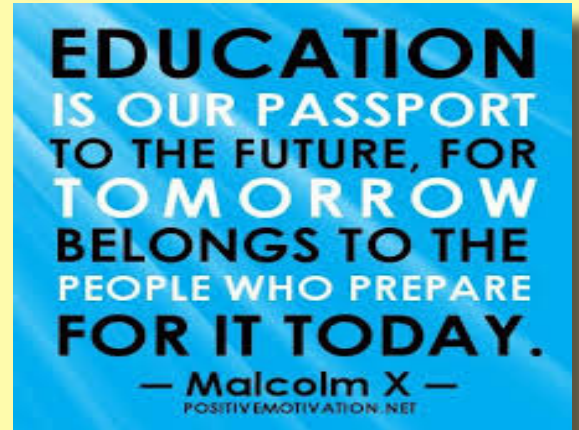
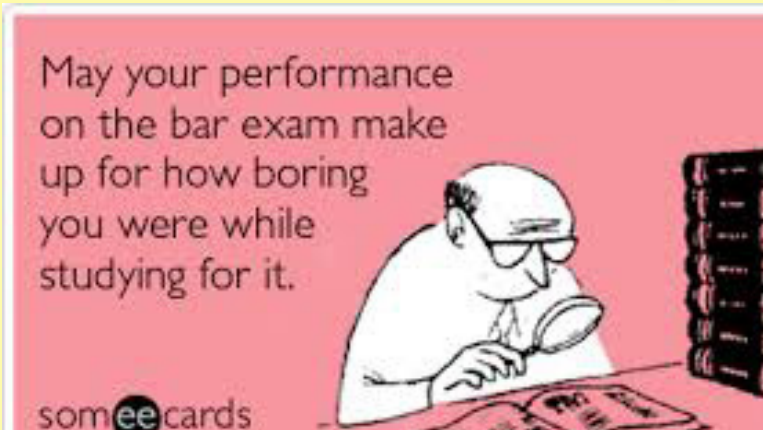
## Quotable Quotes

By Asnake Solomon, Testing Center, SMU

- “Never stop learning because life never stops teaching.” (www. Live Life Happy.com)
- “Success is neither a high jump nor a long jump, it is the steps of marathon.” (Thomas Henry Huxley)
- “Climb high, climb far, your goal the sky, your aim the stars” (Jim Rohn)
- “Minds are like parachutes they only function when open.” (Thomas Dewar)
- “Look forward to your failures and prove you can do better.” (Gabbie Henderson)
- “Be patient, the lessons you learn today will benefit you tomorrow.” ([www.quotes.com](http://www.quotes.com))
- “You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.” (Abraham Lincoln)



## Pictorial Quotable Quotes







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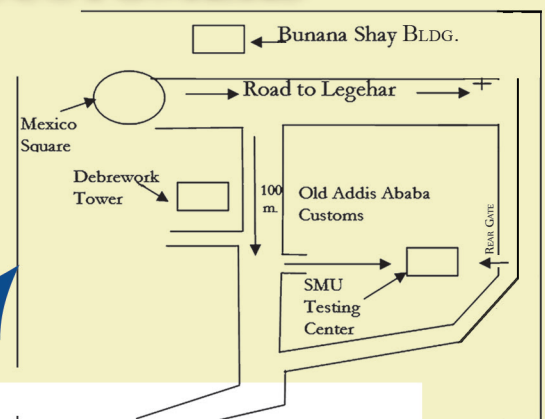
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