Direct Assessment Methods

- **Portfolios:** Collections of student work (and sometimes other material such as transcripts, test scores, or performance reviews) intended to illustrate achievement of learning outcomes. The mantra is “collect, select, reflect, connect.”

- **Capstones:** A wide variety of *culminating* projects, assignments, performances, or even experiences, e.g., faculty-supervised community service, internships in which the student demonstrates a wide range of knowledge, skills and abilities.

- **Performance:** Activities, live or recorded, designed to demonstrate specific outcomes, e.g. a poster presentation, conduct of a class, a musical or theatrical performance, client counseling, facilitation of a group discussion, “think aloud” analysis of a text.

- **Common Assignments:** Student work produced in response to a course assignment is examined for multiple purposes, e.g., to determine command of course material but also to assess writing skill, information literacy, critical thinking, etc.
  
  - “Common assignments”: the same assignment across multiple courses;
  
  - “Template assignments”: the same format but not identical assignment across multiple courses
  
  - “Secondary readings”: student work is examined “secondarily” for other qualities beyond command of course material.

- **Course Management Programs:** Software that allows faculty to set up chat rooms, threaded discussions, etc., and capture student responses.

- **Classroom assessment/research:** An approach to assessment pioneered by K. Patricia Cross and Thomas A. Angelo; provides a large collection of techniques individual instructors can use in their classrooms to discover what students are learning – or not – and to make rapid adjustments. For example: compiling results from a rubric every time an assignment is turned in and adjusting the class based on the results.

- **Local or licensure tests:** Tests designed in relation to the specific course, program, or institution’s curriculum and learning outcomes, as opposed to generic, commercially available tests. Can be cumulative (e.g. comprehensives in the major) or less encompassing but still cross-cutting. Format may vary; need not be multiple choice, as in most commercial tests.

Indirect Assessment Methods

- **Surveys:** Common method of gathering information from people on a wide variety of topics (personal characteristics, expectations, experience, attitudes, values, behaviors, perceptions, satisfaction), generally in the form of a questionnaire, which may be distributed in hard copy or online or – less often – administered by phone.
• Interviews: One-on-one conversations designed to elicit a variety of information; may range from highly structured (much like an orally conducted survey) to open-ended and exploratory.

• Focus grups: Structured, in-depth, group discussions of specific topics, guided by a trained moderator and generally audio-taped, video-taped, or recorded by an assistant moderator.

• Ethnographic research: Selected students serve as participant-observers, gathering information about learning and/or student experience through conversations with fellow students, observation, and reflection on their own experiences. Participant-observers meet regularly with faculty and/or staff conducting the study to refine questions, share findings, analyze them, and plan next steps.

• Student self- and peer-assessment: The student demonstrates the ability to accurately self-assess a piece of work or performance, usually in relation to one or more outcomes and a set of criteria, e.g. rubrics