Evaluating Assessments in Course Designs: A Self-Directed Learning Plan

Course Description: This self-directed learning plan aims to equip individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to critically evaluate assessments used in course designs. By understanding the principles of effective assessment, participants will gain the ability to choose, design, and implement assessments that align with learning outcomes and promote student success. This course is ideal for anyone interested in improving their understanding of assessment practices, including educators, curriculum developers, and individuals seeking to enhance their own learning.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

- **Define and articulate the purpose of assessment in education.**
- **Identify different types of assessments and their strengths and weaknesses.**
- **Analyze the alignment between assessment tasks and learning outcomes.**
- **Evaluate the validity, reliability, and fairness of assessments.**
- **Develop and design assessments that are effective, engaging, and appropriate for diverse learners.**
- **Apply principles of assessment for formative and summative purposes.**
- **Critically examine the ethical considerations in assessment practices.**

Course Structure: This course is structured as a self-directed learning plan with a flexible schedule. Learners are expected to dedicate approximately 3-4 hours per week over 13 weeks to complete the assigned activities.

Course Materials:

- **Essential Readings:** This course will utilize a variety of freely available resources, including articles, book chapters, and online resources. A curated list of recommended readings will be provided in the weekly modules.
- **Online Tools:** Learners will have access to online tools such as assessment design templates, rubrics, and online assessment platforms.
- **Reflection and Discussion:** The course encourages learners to engage in reflective practices and participate in online discussions with other learners or mentors.

Weekly Modules:

Week 1: Introduction to Assessment * **Key Concepts:** Defining assessment, types of assessments, formative vs. summative assessment, alignment with learning outcomes. * **Readings:** * **"Assessment for Learning: Building a Culture of Evidence" by Dylan Wiliam** * **"Understanding by Design: Framework for Designing High-Quality Assessments" by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe** * **Activities:** * **Self-Assessment:** Reflect on your current understanding of assessment practices. * **Discussion Forum:** Share your thoughts on the purpose of assessment in education.

Week 2: Evaluating Assessments * **Key Concepts:** Validity, reliability, fairness, and bias in assessment. * **Readings:** * **"Assessment in Education: Principles, Policies, and Practices" by Linda Crocker & Jay Algina** * **"Assessment: A Practical Guide for Teachers" by Linda Darling-Hammond** * **Activities:** * **Critical Analysis:** Analyze an existing assessment tool, focusing on validity, reliability, and fairness. * **Reflection:** Reflect on your own experiences as a student and how assessment impacted your learning.

Week 3: Designing Assessments * **Key Concepts:** Formative assessment strategies, authentic assessments, performance-based assessments, technology-based assessments. * **Readings:** * **"Assessment for Learning: Putting It into Practice" by Dylan Wiliam and Paul Black** * **"The Handbook of Formative Assessment" edited by James McMillan** * **Activities:** * **Design Challenge:** Design an assessment task for a specific learning outcome. * **Peer Review:** Provide feedback on a peer's assessment design.

Week 4: Implementing and Evaluating Assessments * **Key Concepts:** Using assessment data for improvement, providing feedback to students, grading practices, and ethical considerations in assessment. * **Readings:** * **"Grading for Equity: What We Know and What We Need to Do" by Joe Feldman** * **"The Ethics of Assessment" by Robert Stake** * **Activities:** * **Case Study:** Analyze a real-world assessment scenario and identify potential ethical issues. * **Reflection:** Reflect on how you can use assessment data to improve your own learning or teaching practices.

Weeks 5 - 13: The subsequent weeks will focus on applying the acquired knowledge and skills through:

- **In-depth case studies of different assessment types.**
- **Developing assessment portfolios showcasing your own design and evaluation skills.**
- **Engaging in ongoing discussions and peer-to-peer learning activities.**
- **Continuous self-reflection and assessment of your learning progress.**

Assessment:

- **Self-Assessment:** This course emphasizes self-reflection and continuous assessment of learning progress. Learners are expected to regularly review their understanding and identify areas for improvement.
- **Assessment Portfolio:** By the end of the course, learners will compile an assessment portfolio showcasing their work

throughout the learning process. This will include:

- **Assessment analysis reports:** Critically evaluating existing assessments.
- **Assessment design projects:** Developing and evaluating assessments for specific learning outcomes.
- **Reflective journals:** Documenting learning experiences and personal insights.

Conclusion:

This self-directed learning plan provides a structured approach to enhancing your understanding of assessment practices in course designs. Through engaging with the materials, actively participating in activities, and reflecting on your learning, you will develop the skills and knowledge necessary to create effective, fair, and impactful assessments. Remember, this is your own personal learning journey â€" tailor the course to your specific needs and interests.