

## Chapter IV

# Authentic Online Assessment: Three Case Studies in Teacher Education

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## Abstract

*An action research project conducted over a 12-month period focused on authentic technology-enhanced assessment. This chapter examines three case study experiences in the field of teacher education that attempted to align learning outcomes, activities, and assessment tasks in three teaching and learning modules. The modules focus on diverse content areas from creative arts (art education), information and applied technology (fashion design), and the Centre for Integrating Technology in Education (virtual learning communities).*

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## Introduction

The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) is a teacher education university. Within the institute there are 12 academic departments: Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Policy and Administration, Educational Psychology, Counseling and Learn-

ing Needs, Science, Social Sciences, Creative Arts, Mathematics, Information and Applied Technology, Early Childhood Education, Chinese, and English. The HKIED:

*Offers a range of programmes leading to the award of certificates, first degrees and postgraduate diplomas, which provide suitable preparation for a career in education and teaching in the preschool, school and vocational training sectors; and also offers a series of programmes which provide professional education and development for serving teachers in these sectors.* (Hong Kong Institute of Education, 2004b)

There are approximately 8,000 full-time and part-time students and approximately 700 nonacademic staff and 325 academic staff on campus. All modules are taught in the face-to-face mode, with some academic departments utilizing online learning to enhance teaching and learning. The HKIED is one of the few universities in Hong Kong using the Blackboard ML Learning Management System at the Institutional level rather than just at the departmental level. These details are provided in order to illustrate the context for the learning-oriented assessment project.

The learning-oriented assessment project (LOAP) (HKIED, 2004a) is a three year University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded project that involves collaboration among several tertiary institutions in Hong Kong. LOAP focuses on developing awareness and good practices in learning-oriented assessment in the context of higher education. The rationale for focusing on the learning aspects of assessment is fourfold: (a) Student learning is influenced by the assessments that they undertake; (b) good assessment practices offer the promise of creating the desired learning outcomes; (c) assessment has been identified both locally and internationally as a key area for tertiary educators' professional development; and (d) assessment is designated by the UGC as a focus area for the teaching and learning quality process review (TLQPR). Modeling and promoting good assessment practices will enhance the quality and culture of assessment, which has been identified as the solution to a major barrier to improving Hong Kong education. To investigate the value and benefits from learning-oriented assessment, six action-research teams were formed in order to examine core areas for improving assessment. These action-research teams comprised feedback for learning and assessment, field experience assessment, the know-want-learn (KWL) method of self-assessment, performance assessment, portfolio assessment, and technology-enhanced assessment (Hong Kong Institute of Education, 2004a).

The technology-enhanced assessment action research team consisted of four teacher-educators from four different departments: Early Childhood Education, Information and Applied Technology, Creative Arts, and the Centre for Integrating Technology in Education. Our focus over the 12-month period was to improve the use of learning-oriented assessment in four separate modules in teacher education. The focus of this chapter is on three of these modules, which were taught in the blended mode and employed some aspects of online learning. By initially examining teacher and student perceptions of technology-enhanced assessment, we hoped that we would refine our assessment, redesign our module to reflect this new assessment potential, and consequently improve teaching and learning within our three classes. A core question

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