Assessment vs. Evaluation

It's not uncommon to hear the terms assessment evaluation and test use interchangeably. They actually have distinct differences. Tests can be a type of assessment or evaluation. We're not going to focus on them for the purpose of this course. Instead we're going to focus on comparing assessment and evaluation both in differences in how they can work together.

So starting off with what's different, an assessment is going to be a collection of multi-dimensional data that provides feedback. We use assessments to identify what students know and are able to do. This usually comes as part of a process so throughout the course evaluations are judgments about quality based on a defined set of values evaluations are typically used as a measure of effectiveness to determine success. So as you can see here we're deciding based on a set of giving criteria where a student would rank.

So overview of how we use them, assessment, you're really looking at monitoring learning you want to provide feedback that drives improvement and we want to maintain accountability. Feedback can actually be for both students and instructors depending on the type and purpose of the specific assessment. Evaluations are gonna be used to assign grades, analyze success, and make decisions.

Evaluations in general have a more negative connotation due to the fact that they are linked to grades and success. Evaluations though can inform a larger audience about success so we can use them to analyze a course or a program. Students often report their grades out to graduate school admissions or on job applications. The valuation tends to have a broader scope in that people outside of the student and the instructor might be influenced by the results that are reported.

Ideally, we should be developing tasks for a course that allow assessment and evaluation to work together. Evaluation will help keep a focus on measurable standards while assessment helps to create a culture of evidence that provides proof of progress in learning. When we align these tasks with the learning objectives that are both observable and measurable we can encompass the opportunity to provide feedback in addition to also determining success. Moving forward in this course we are going to use the term assessment exclusively but there are going to be pieces of evaluation mixed in there and that you will be assigning grades and determinating student success based on their performance on assessments.