

ASSESSMENT IN FOCUS

Quarterly Newsletter of the Testing Center

St. Mary's University College

Volume I, No.2, May 2011

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Assessment in Focus is dedicated to the dissemination of information about events and developments at the Testing Center, that would assist in the development and maintenance of up-to - standard and quality education at SMUC, and at similar institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Assessment in Focus, which is a quarterly newsletter of the Testing Center (TC) of St. Mary's University College (SMUC), deals with current core issues and activities that take place at the Testing Center. Of course, measurement and evaluation, as a key activity of the TC, remains a central issue in the course of any educational training at large. In this issue this fact is highlighted by one article. Aside from that, the present issue of Assessment in Focus among others treats additional issues.

The conduct of trainings on measurement and evaluation, at all levels for SMUC Regular Program, CODL and TC academic staff members, have been included as news worthy items in this issue. Training on measurement and evaluation and test item analysis for newly recruited assessors of the SMUC TC is one example. And these trainings raise assessors' awareness, inculcating knowledge of measurement and evaluation in the minds of the assessors with respect to test item development, test planning and test item analysis. The major aim is to help them prepare test blueprints so as to prepare exams, participate in carrying out item analysis and help the development of the TC Item Bank. The trainings aim to fill the skill and knowledge gaps of the assessors, so that quality assessment tools could be developed in order to help enhance the provision of quality education and training.

Such refreshment in training is of high importance to keep the development of testing tools and educational processes on gear and meet the Testing Center plans. The TC of SMUC has also a well-coordinated training program for

Faculties and Departments of the University College. It is also ready to give external customers prompt responses when they request trainings on measurement and evaluation. In connection to the consecutive trainings given to the University College staff up to now, the immense comments and feedbacks from trainees indicate that the capacity building schemes of the TC have successfully helped those who have participated in the training gain a lot, in order to carry out their student evaluation responsibilities more effectively. To keep the process in progress, the TC has now strengthened its capacity for providing trainings in educational measurement and evaluation to help SMUC academic staff use better assessment tools, so as to assist the achievement of better quality and standardized educational goals from which excellence can be expected.



	Editor's Note.....1
	Approaches to Assessment2
	Trainings at the Testing Center4
	Participation of Assessors of the SMUC TC in 2010/11 (2003 E.C.) Term 1 Tutorial Program... 5
	Institutional TVET Comprehensive Exam Administration5
	Training Given to TC Staff on HIV/AIDS and Sexual Harassment.....5
	Participation in Training on SPSS.....6
	Favorite Quotes on Evaluation and Measurement.....6

APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

Assessment lies at the heart of educational processes, continually providing feedback about the teaching-learning process. It therefore needs to be incorporated systematically into teaching strategies and practices at all levels. An adequate system of assessment enables monitoring of performance as well as diagnosis and remedying of learning problems. To achieve this goal of instruction, the selection and application of appropriate assessment approach is vital.



Founder and President of SMUC, Asst. Professor Wondwosen Tamrat Opening One of the Many Training Sessions on Assessment at SMUC

There are two approaches to assessment – norm and criterion-referenced. A norm-referenced assessment is used to find an individual's status with respect to performance of other individuals. To the contrary, criterion-referenced assessment is used to ascertain an individual's status with respect to a well defined assessment domain. In the later approach, tests are designed to describe

how well learners can perform on a clearly specified set of learning tasks, rather than to indicate their relative standing in a norm group (Nitko, 2004). The distinction is more concerned with the differences in the interpretation of performance on test items rather than in the nature of the items themselves. It is the use made of results, rather than the nature of the items that clearly distinguishes between test types (Lewin, 1993). Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced more precisely describe kinds of test-score interpretations than type of tests (Ebel, 1991).

Most recently, the growth of the various types of vocational education provision has led to an increased emphasis on competency-based approaches to training which have been seen as specially suited to criterion-referenced (CR) assessment. CR assessment attempts to assess a far greater variety of learners' competences which will demand different modes of assessment. (Satterly, 1989). The criteria provide a focus for the teaching and learning diagnosis of learning difficulty, and provide detailed description of the learner's achievement.



Regular Program Students Taking a Practical Test at a SMUC Computer Lab

Criterion-referenced test construction assumes predetermined domain statements. The outcomes of teaching and learning (acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes) are organized into domains. CR tests attempt to assess the learners mastery of relatively specific areas of competence and performance. An emphasis on criterion referencing can be applied to any mode of assessment be it formative or summative; written, oral or practical; school based or external assessment. CR assessment requires the use of appropriate planning which involves a careful consideration of a large number of factors, including determining the purpose of testing, identifying and defining the intended learning outcomes, preparing test specifications, determining the measurement procedure and type of items, etc.

In criterion-referenced approach, performance can be judged in terms of dichotomous judgment – either the criteria are achieved or not. In order to demonstrate acceptable performance, decision has to be made on acceptable lower threshold limits. Judgments about acceptable levels of performance for mastery against criteria have to be compiled from several sources of data (Lewin, 1993).

The content-based approach to criterion referencing offers an important framework from which to interpret and use achievement test score. Only by criterion referencing can standards be monitored and thus testing and exams could serve

as a way of raising standards. Quality assurance in assessment is an approach that aims for standardization or consistency of approach and thus it focuses on the process of assessment.



SMUC Students Taking TVET Knowledge Test

Nowadays, in Ethiopia, public concern over educational standards comes in waves focusing on quality and efficiency issues of education and training. The major reform lies on the idea of National Vocational Qualifications at different levels, and involving assessment to business and industry-set standards of competence. The Ethiopian government needs to enlist strong support from educational establishments in order to carry out its plans if assessment is to be used as a major instrument for change.

Higher educational institutes in Ethiopia need to develop policies and procedures and new directions to educational assessment. They are responsible to design and realize appropriate assessment policy which also promotes social ends and improve the overall quality of education and training.



SMUC Students Taking IT Test

In this regard, St. Mary's University College has made a massive investment in the program of assessment designed to affect the whole conduct of teaching and learning. The Testing Center of the University College has been established for this purpose and is aggressively working towards improving the process and impact of assessment in line with the policy of the University College.

References

- 1- Nitko, A.J. (2004). *Educational Assessment of Students* (4th Edition). Pearson Education Inc, New Jersey.
- 2- Bude, U. and Lewin, K. (1997). *Improving Test Design*. Education, Science and Documentation Center, Bonn.
- 3- Ebel, R and Frisbie, D.. (1991). *Essentials of Educational Measurement*. (5th Edition). Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
- 4- Satterly, D. (1989). *Assessment in Schools*. Black Well.

TRAINING AT THE TESTING CENTER

1) Training on Institutional TVET Comprehensive Exam

On January 1, 2011, training was given on Institutional TVET Comprehensive Examination (formerly called COC-Style Test). A total of 41 academic staff members from the Regular Program, the College of Open and Distance Learning (CODL) and The Testing Center (TC) participated in the training. The training was given by Ato Mohammad_hussein Abubeker of SMUC at Mexico Campus focusing mainly on Institutional TVET Comprehensive Exam and TVET teaching materials for half a day. In the training, a number of questions were raised by the trainees and detailed discussions were made. At the end, the trainees strongly expressed that what they gained from the training would contribute greatly in improving their daily work in regard to teaching and assessment.



Training Being Given to SMUC Staff, by Ato Mohammed_hussein Abubeker of SMUC

2) Training on Invigilation

Prior to the commencement of the First Semester Exam for Regular Program, on January 6, 2011, a training was given on invigilation at SMUC Mexico Campus by Dr. Wubishet Shiferaw of SMUC TC, for 8 administrative staff members of the Regular Program. The training was aimed at raising awareness about invigilation and how it should be carried out. At the end of the training, the participants appreciated that the training was helpful on developing their knowledge in invigilation and would also be of practical value. Similarly, training on Test Administration was conducted on January 15, 2011, in which 39 Regular Program and Testing Center staff members took part at Mexico Campus, SMUC. The training was given by Dr. Wubishet Shiferaw, for half a day.

3) Training for New Recruits

Training on Measurement and Evaluation and Test Item Analysis was given on January 25, 2011, for half a day at SMUC Midir Babur Campus to newly recruited assessors of the TC. The training was given by Dr. Wubishet Shiferaw, who explained that the training would help the new assessors to raise their awareness about measurement and evaluation, and Test Item Analysis and adjust themselves to the workings of the in-house style of the TC in performing their work effectively.



Dr. Wubishet Shiferaw Giving Training to New Recruits of TC

PARTICIPATION OF ASSESSORS OF THE SMUC TC IN 2010/11 (2003E.C.) TERM 1 TUTORIAL PROGRAM

For SMUC CODL learners, tutorials of 2010/11 (2003E.C.) Term 1 were given on January 29, and 30, 2011. Assessors of the TC participated in the program as tutors. The participants from TC explained that this opportunity enabled them to know better learners, and they would use their gained knowledge as a feedback in the preparation of assessment tools.



CODL Tutorial Class, Biology Lab Training for Diploma Natural Science Teacher Education Learners Being Given by a CODL Tutor

INSTITUTIONAL TVET COMPREHENSIVE EXAM ADMINISTRATION



ITCE Test in Accounting Being Conducted at SMUC

An Institutional TVET Comprehensive Exam (ITCE) (formerly called COC-Style Test) was administered for SMUC Regular Program Mid-Year 2010/11 graduates and past graduates, on March 19 and 20, 2011 at SMUC Mexico Campus. All in all, 85 students of Level IV, TVET programs of Accounting, Marketing, Law, Office Administration and Secretarial Technology, and IT Assistance sat for the exams and appreciated the efforts of the University College for helping them get ready for the world of work and any future challenges.

Editorial Committee

Degefa Burayou
Bayulegn Ayalew
Nebiyu Alemayehu

Type Setting
Woineshet Asfaw

Graphics Design

Robel Tegene

TRAINING GIVEN TO TC STAFF ON HIV/AIDS AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A one-day awareness training was conducted for SMUC staff including three staff members from TC, at Midir Babur Campus, SMUC, on February 18, 2011. The training was given by Ato Bekele Delelegn from FHAPCO and W/ro Gimbwegish Kebede from World Learning. The former dwelt on the topic "Basic Facts about HIV/AIDS, Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Development Agenda". The aim was to create a continuous awareness among SMUC staff to help them shoulder HIV/AIDS related responsibilities among which is primarily to fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. The training was organized by the Gender Office of SMUC.



Asst. Professor Wondwosen Tamrat Opening Training on HIV/AIDS

An awareness discussion was conducted on the topic "Sexual Harassment" by W/ro Gimbwegish Kebede. The intention was to build confidence in all in the fight against brutal acts from the male sex against females.



The SMUC Staff on Training



SMUC Staff on SPSS Training



W/ro Ergogie Tesfaye, Head of Gender Office of SMUC Which Organized the Training, and the Trainers, Ato Bekele Delelegn and W/ro Gmbwegish Kebede

PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING ON SPSS

A training on SPSS training was offered to build the capacity of the University College staff, including assessors of the Testing Center, to engage in research activities. The training was conducted by Ato Mesfin Tekleab and Ato Teshager Mersha of SMUC from March 28, 2011 to April 2, 2011. The training exclusively focused on research methodology for Social Sciences using SPSS package. The training was organized by the Research and Knowledge Management Office of SMUC; and the participants, of which three are TC staff, were awarded certificates at the end of the workshop.

QUOTES CORNER

Favorite Quotes on Evaluation and Measurement

“The only man who behaves sensibly is my tailor, he takes my measurements anew every time he sees me, while all the rest go on with their old measurements and expect me to fit them.”

George Bernard Shaw

Intelligent Measurement.wordpress.com,
March 17,2006

“Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count, everything that counts cannot be easily counted.”

Albert Einstein

“The most serious mistakes are not being made as a result of wrong answers. The truly dangerous thing is asking the wrong question.”

Peter Drucker

“One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.”

Milton Friedman

“The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple.”

Oscar Wilde

Intelligent Measurement.wordpress.com,
December 23, 2002

**SERVICES OF THE TESTING CENTER
AVAILABLE FOR OUTSIDE
CUSTOMERS
(ORGANIZATIONS,
INSTITUTIONS,
GOVERNMENT ORGANS,
INDIVIDUALS, ETC.)**

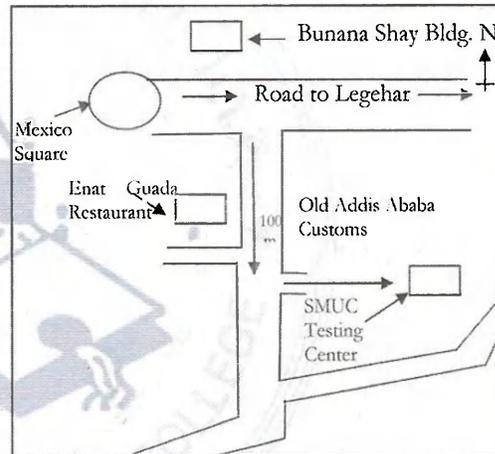
Services that are available to outside customers include:-

- ❖ Screening tests for:
 - Employment
 - Placement
- Etc.
- ❖ TOEFL Internet-Based Test (iBT)
- ❖ Training on measurement and evaluation.

The Testing Center is located opposite Bunana Shay Building near Mexico Square. See the sketch map for details.

OUR ADDRESS

**St. Mary's University College
Testing Center**



Telephone: (251) 115 51 09 91
 Fax: (251) 115 53 80 00
 E-mail: testing_center@smuc.edu.et
 P.O.Box 18490

TAKE

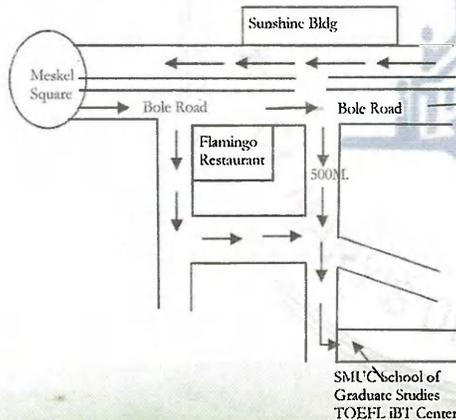
TOEFL iBT

at St. Mary's University College

TOEFL iBT CENTER

**School of Graduate Studies Campus
(BOLE CAMPUS)**

Register online at website: www.ets.org/toefl



OUR ADDRESS

**St. Mary's University College
Testing Center**

TOEFL iBT CENTER

**at the
School of Graduate
Studies
(BOLE CAMPUS)**

Telephone: 0912069511
 (251) 115 52 45 75
 (251) 115 51 09 91
 Fax: (251) 115 53 80 00
 E-mail: toeflibt@smuc.edu.et
 P.O.Box 18490