

#### 4. The Pre/Post Course-Based Assessment Method

This model is very easy to use and it should satisfy external accountability demands. BUT, as with all assessments, those who use it should write a report on the project and publicize results.

##### Overview

- Works best in those disciplines in which knowledge acquisition is measured through objective (scantronable) means.
- The instructor develops (or uses) a simple exam and gives it to her students on the first day of class, focusing on class-related terms, principles, concepts that some may be vaguely aware of **but which the class itself will teach.**
- To limit student frustration, it's probably best to focus on those "factual" elements of the course that are foundational, explicitly taught in the course, yet still common enough for some incoming students to have a grasp of.
- The instructor administers the same test on the last day of classes. She compares the results of the two tests, identifies areas where significant learning gains have been demonstrably achieved, and notes problem areas in knowledge acquisition suggested by patterns in some of the answers.
- The post-test could be administered as a kind of **formative assessment method** somewhere during the mid-point of the semester. Remember; formative assessment provides opportunity for altering instruction to improve student learning.

##### Benefits & Problems

1. This model scores highest for ease of use;
2. It is likely to pass muster with ACCJC, **assuming instructors write a short report on their projects and publicize results in program review or assessment update documents.**
3. It is not likely to improve the deeper kinds of learning we most desire, but as a first (or partial) assessment step, it is considerably better than nothing.

##### Discipline Suggestions:

Psychology 1 instructors can ask entering students to define "behaviorism"; Economics professors can ask student to explain what inflation is; even Art History teachers can see if students can distinguish Manet and Mo<sup>1</sup>net meaningfully.

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<sup>1</sup> Flick, Arend (2007). "Non-collaborative, single-course outcomes assessment"