# Workshop

# EvalCOMIX 3.2: A web service for *u*-feedback and *u*-feedforward

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## Abstract

The EVALfor research group has developed, in the past years, a series of projects based upon the principles of the Learning Oriented Assessment (Carless et al, 2006) and sustainable assessment (Boud, 2000), co-financed by different Spanish public agencies and the European social Fund. One of the main products of this research is the web service EvalCOMIX (http://evalcomix.uca.es), specifically designed and developed by EVALfor to aid teachers and students in implementing participative assessment activities for distance and semi-distance learning environments. EvalCOMIX achieves this by using strategies such as self-assessment, peer- assessment and co-assessment.

This workshop provides the necessary information and resources for the participants to use the EvalCOMIX web service. Once completed, participants will have acquired the following skills:

- ✓ Design and construction of assessment tools, such as: checklists, rating scales, semantic differentials and rubrics.
- ✓ Design assessment tools that promote feedback and feedforward.
- ✓ Use of designed tools for teacher assessment processes, self-assessment, peer-assessment and co-assessment.
- ✓ Analyse results from the assessment tasks undertaken.

The workshop has been designed as an essentially practical exercise in which participants design and develop their own assessment instruments for use in LMS. To this end, participants will initially be presented with the basic characteristics of the EvalCOMIX web service (design, management, import and export of assessment instruments). The first part will then conclude with a practical exercise in which each participant will develop at least one rating scale and one simple rubric with EvalCOMIX.

After that, a presentation will be given on ways to use the designed assessment instruments, in order to perform teacher assessment, self-assessment, peer- assessment and co-assessment.

Finally, participants will be presented with the possibilities EvalCOMIX offers for analysis of results obtained from an assessment process, by means of analysis of the different graphs presented by EvalCOMIX.

All the tools offered by EvalCOMIX can be used not only on a personal computer, but also on other more current devices such as smartphones or tablets. EvalCOMIX thus transcends the limits of e-assessment and brings forward the beginning of ubiquitous assessment (*u*-assessment).

**Extended summary**

**INTRODUCTION**

The EVALfor research group has developed, in the past years, a series of projects based upon the principles of learning oriented assessment (Carless et al., 2006) and sustainable assessment (Boud, 2000), and co-financed by different Spanish public agencies and the European social Fund. One of the main products of this research is the web service EvalCOMIX (http://evalcomix.uca.es), specifically designed and developed by EVALfor to aid teachers and students in implementing participative assessment activities for distance and semi-distance learning environments. EvalCOMIX achieves these using strategies such as self-assessment, peer- assessment and co-assessment.

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**FRAMEWORK**

***From grading to feedforward***

In sharing the idea expressed by Boud (2006), by which assessment is one of the key aspects for change and innovation, since it determines how and what students study, the need to rethink these systems and procedures becomes evident. It is necessary to evolve from a system in which the teacher grades to another in which both teacher and student develop their assessment skills and, therefore, their teaching and professional competences (Rodríguez Gómez, Ibarra Sáiz y Gómez Ruiz, 2011). Nonetheless, from a higher-education perspective, as even Boud (2006: xix) warns, innovation in the field of assessment does not mean inventing

new assessment activities, but rather that the assessment activity is innovative with regards to the particular context of the experiences and the courses undertaken by the students.

Research undertaken in the 80's revealed the importance of formative assessment and the 90's provided recognition for the impact of students' participation on the assessment process through strategies such as self-assessment and peer- assessment (Gielen, Docky y Onghena, 2011). The first decade of the new century has provided proof that supports the relevance and impact of the implementation of a dialogic strategy such as feedforward. The need to provide information is thus emphasized, not retrospectively and without room for change or improvement (feedback) but instead set upon the future (feedforward), in a way that the information provided can be used by the student to improve both short term and mid-long term, in the professional field - thus facilitating life-long learning.

Higgins et al. (2001) demanded the need to change the emphasis that was being put on feedback and focus on feedforward. In that respect, Bloxham and Boyd (2007) highlight how recent studies are conferring more importance to the concept of feedforward, which refers to the aspects on which students should concentrate in the future. Knight (2007) insists on the need for both feedback and feedforward, establishing that both activities are consubstantial to the assessment process when viewed from a complex learning perspective. The Berkeley Evaluation & Assessment Research (BEAR) System (Wilson and Scalise, 2006: 646) is a recent example of the gradual addition of feedforward as a strategy. It is based, amongst other aspects, on the contribution by faculty of the appropriate "feedback, feedforward and follow-up".

### *From feedforward to e-feedforward*

A necessary addition to the situation previously described is the new scenario dominated by the omnipresence and the increasing use of information and communications technology (ICT) in the teaching-learning process. Traditional teaching, based almost solely on presentiality, is giving way to a new context of learning in which distance interaction between teacher and student is supported by the use of ICTs.

Within the e-learning context, research is required that contributes to the design and development of new products, new networks and new ways of e-learning that result in improvements to current systems, design of new interfaces and networks with greater potential and utilities. This new perspective on e-learning should, however, be tested, applied, used and revised through daily use in the academic context (Haythornthwaite & Andrews, 2011).

In accordance with this context, we cannot shy away from the technological presence and hence any feedback or feedforward process must be articulated by these new tools and services. This brings us to the beginning of e-feedforward, that is, to provide the information that students will be able to use in their future learning process, be it academic or professional, mediate or immediate, through the use of technology, as Ertl (2010), Thompson (2006) and Thompson & McGregor (2009) have highlighted.

**WORKSHOP STRUCTURE**

The workshop will focus on the following topics:

- Designing assessment tools with EvalCOMIX: checklists, rating scales, semantic differentials and rubrics.
- Self-assessment, peer- assessment and co-assessment with EvalCOMIX
- Feedback and feedforward with EvalCOMIX

The workshop has been designed as an essentially practical exercise in which participants design and develop their own assessment instruments for use in LMS. To this end, participants will initially be presented with the basic characteristics of the EvalCOMIX web service (design, management, import and export of assessment instruments). The first part will then conclude with a practical exercise in which each participant will develop at least one rating scale and one simple rubric with EvalCOMIX.

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Finally, participants will be presented with the possibilities EvalCOMIX offers for analysis of results obtained from an assessment process, by means of analysis of the different graphs presented by EvalCOMIX.

All the instruments offered by EvalCOMIX can be used not only on a personal computer, but also on other more current devices such as smartphones or tablets. EvalCOMIX thus transcends the limits of e-assessment and brings forward the beginning of ubiquitous assessment.

**How does this workshop relate to the conference theme 'Linking Multiple Perspectives on Assessment'?**

One of the key issues of the conference is formative and summative assessment. It must not be forgotten that the use of ICT's in this field is of great importance nowadays.

This workshop provides a specific technological tool that answers the main issues discussed at this conference, since through the use of the EvalCOMIX web service:

- Students can actively participate in the assessment process by self-assessment, peer-assessment and co-assessment.
- Feedback and feedforward is offered in a quick, simple and clear manner, using tools such as personal computers, smartphones or tablets.
- Student learning can be improved by active participation of the student in the assessment process.

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