

# **Why do we assess the way we do? Exploration of General Chemistry instructors' rationales behind their assessment practices**

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Instructional innovations and reforms over the last decades have been mostly focused on practices to engage students with the materials in the classrooms. One aspect of instruction that plays a key role in learning but that has been overlooked in these reform efforts is assessment. Students use their instructor's assessment practices to identify what their instructor values and therefore to prioritize their studying. Recognizing the influence that assessment plays in student learning, chemistry-based education researchers have been advocating for the implementation of new assessment approaches that can support the development of students' content knowledge and scientific practices. In order to help the propagation of these new approaches, we first need to understand chemistry instructors' thinking about assessment practices. In this study, we explored 19 general chemistry instructors' rationales for their assessment practices. These instructors come from 14 different institutions across the United States of America. We describe their assessment practices, their views on the purpose of assessment, and the alignment between this purpose and their practices. Finally, we also explore external influencers that affect their assessment practices.



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