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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *The Assessment Playbook for Distance and Blended Learning* by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, Vince Bustamante, and John Hattie. This section explores assessment tasks that work for distance learning.

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## ASSESSMENT COOKIE 7: EVERYTHING IS SEARCHABLE, SO PLAN ACCORDINGLY

Many of the assessments given to students in physical school are under lock and key, meaning students are required to complete these in solitude with no possibility of an open book test. Many of our state and provincial exams are of this nature, so teachers want to mimic these types of assessments. These types of assessments are often seen as difficult, but we must reflect on whether they are rigorous.

Consider this. How might your assessments change should you remove the lock-and-key parameters mentioned above? If in reflection you found yourself wondering whether students would cheat, ask someone else for the answer, or simply just do an internet search, there is a possibility that that assessment lacks complexity, and thus is not rigorous. A multiple-choice exam in which students can search online for the correct answers is not a suitable assessment in distance learning and thus our task becomes determining what assessments are suitable in both authenticity and rigor in regard to student learning. Creating assessments that are rigorous and relevant to student learning is challenging, but important.

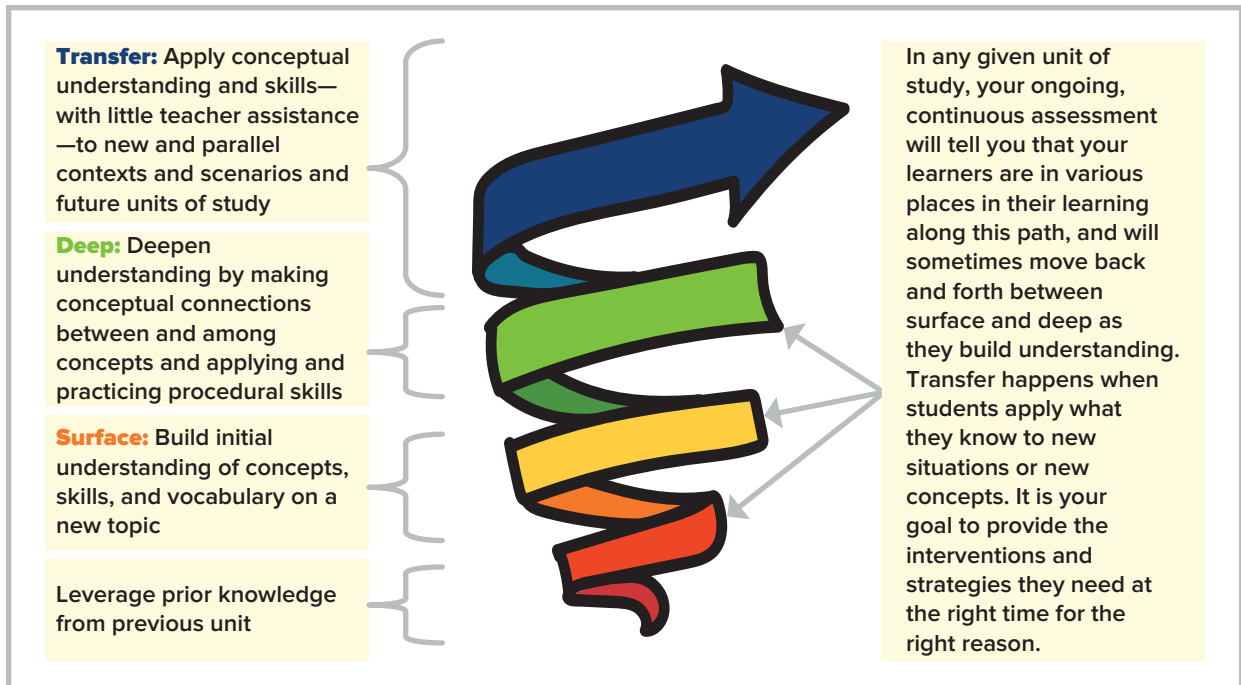
Remember that nearly everything can be researched online. Teachers are tasked with navigating through learning experiences and assessments knowing full well that students have access to the internet and that access can provide them answers to many of the questions asked on assessments. In order to keep students engaged in their learning and focused on meaningful assessment and evaluation, we must reconsider how to create assessments that require students to do more than simply find an answer. Although noted as a challenge, we can also look at this as an opportunity for us to reevaluate our assessment practices to ensure our students are receiving an evaluation that is fair, focused, and equitable. In doing so, we can hopefully eliminate opportunities for our students to search for answers via the internet and rather engage them in high-impact assessment.

How about this as a way to think about some of the assessment tasks you give: Can Siri or Alexa answer the question? If so, you may want to expand the types of assessments students are asked to complete. But before you throw out all those items, a quick review of the phases of learning is in order. Learning starts at the surface and progresses through transfer (see Figure 10). We think of these phases as follows (for more information see Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016):

- ➔ **Surface learning:** The foundational and introductory skills and concepts that students need to learn.
- ➔ **Deep learning:** The ability to identify the connections and relationships between various skills and concepts that have been learned. In deep learning, students develop schema.
- ➔ **Transfer of learning:** The ability to apply learning to new situations, to self-regulate learning, and to identify new learning opportunities.

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## 10 PHASES OF LEARNING



Source: Hattie, J., Fisher, D., Frey, N., Gojak, L. M., Moore, S. D., & Mellman, W. (2016). *Visible learning for mathematics, grades K–12: What works best to optimize student learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Of course, assessments can be developed at any phase of learning. Google, Siri, and Alexa probably know the answers to many of the surface learning questions and tasks. But as learning progresses through deep and transfer, it's harder for students to simply ask their technology for the answer. Thus, our assessments need to scale from surface to deep to transfer. And assessment should include tasks that require students to search the internet and *then use that information for something else*. Teaching students how to access and assess the credibility of the information available digitally is an important skill.



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## Screenshots

- ➔ Don't limit assessment tasks to things that can be searched on the internet.
- ➔ There is a difference between surface, deep, and transfer learning and assessments need to align with the appropriate phase of learning.
- ➔ Create assessments that require that students learn how to search the internet.