As all educators know, assessment is a critical component of the teaching and learning cycle. In general, assessments for online classes are established immediately after desired learning goals are defined, and they offer opportunities to evaluate learners the same way they are evaluated in a live classroom (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004). What varies between an online classroom and live classroom are the types of assessment tools and techniques available to the online teacher. What tools are available to the online teacher to accomplish assessment goals? Can those tools serve more than one purpose, and be used for a variety of assessment strategies?

Some assessment tools commonly used by online teachers include a course survey, exam and testing tools that come in the LMS, Internet assessment tools such as HotPotatoes, Quia, ExamBuilder, rubric tools like RubiStar, and quiz creation tools such as QuizStar. Other online tools, such as e-mail and discussion forums, are also used throughout the assessment process.
At the time of this writing, assessment tools available within many LMSs are limited to survey and exam tools that utilize multiple choice, essay, true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and ordering types of questions. These exams have the option to be programmed, therefore, creating random questions, or the options to display one question at a time or all at once, for the test to be taken in a limited time period, and also the option to display or not display correct answers to students after completion of the test. Figure 8.1 shows an example of an online test. After submission of the online test, grades are then automatically recorded.

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