Assessment Tools

Case Study
This tool allows students to demonstrate a specific skill or several skills together using a real-life example. It could be used for students to explain how they would respond to something they've been trained on, such as in their employment or how they might handle a common situation that occurs in organizations.
Benefit – you can determine the focus you are assessing; can be used easily for both leadership roles and employment.
Challenge – can be time consuming to develop the case study as well as a rubric or other guideline to use when assessing the responses.

Exit Interviews
A reflective process to allow students to think about their overall experience.
Benefit – provides an overall view, can be an opportunity to gather feedback about a program or for yourself as an advisor/supervisor, and can provide rich data.
Challenge – requires some thought about the questions or prompts to ask in order to get to deeper reflection and can be time consuming to collect information and then organize themes.

Focus Group/Interview
Can be done in a group (6-10 students) or individually; students are asked questions that typically require a response more than a simple yes/no.
Benefit – can gather rich data, especially about overall experiences.
Challenge – involves planning and being intentional with questions asked; also very time consuming to collect information, transcribe, and then organize themes.

Learning Contracts/Agreement
This is an excellent tool for helping students articulate their commitment to learning through their involvement or employment of their own learning.
Benefit – personal for each individual student and can focus on involvement, personal, or professional goals.
Challenge – time consuming and requires follow-up to be effective.

Observation
Observation alone involves just watching students "on the job" but ideally includes looking for knowledge (ability to define and identify), comprehension (understanding the purpose), application (skills necessary to "do" a task), analysis (ability to deconstruct something into parts), synthesis (ability to reconstruct properly), and evaluation (ability to know whether or not you have done a "good job").
Benefit – basic observation can be an easy tool to use.
Challenge – to use as a measure of student learning, observation needs to be intentional and documented.

One-Minute Paper
Students are asked to reflect or respond to a question that should only take a couple minutes. Can be a great tool to use when training. Examples included muddiest point about topic, what a student learned and how they could apply it, or a specific question about how to respond in a certain situation.
Benefit – easy to administer and doesn't require a lot of preparation; also can be a good way to start reflection with a group.
Challenge – depending on the size of the group, can take time to go through all the responses to organize themes. It is also important the question is the "best" question for the context.

Portfolio
A method for students to demonstrate a variety of experiences and/or skills learned or could be focused for one experience. Portfolios can be electronic or physical and students can upload or include reflections or samples of their work.
Benefit – they are flexible and can include multiple items and can highlights students overall college experience.
Challenge – less common in the co-curricular, requires some platform to gather documents if using an electronic format, and can be time consuming for both the student and staff member.

Reflective Journals
Students write thoughtful responses to set prompt(s) (usually) about their experiences, learning, and/or growth.
Benefit – can gather rich data and be specific about an experience or application of a students' learning.
Challenge – can take time for the student to complete as well as time to read and organize themes.

Reflective Photography
Students can use pictures to capture student learning or meaning of their involvement.
Benefit – allows students to be engaged in a personal and creative way.
Challenge – to fully document learning, there should be some manner to reflect and document the meaning of the pictures.

Rubrics
A rubric can serve as a tool to provide feedback on a student performance or as a self-assessment. Can be used to see improvement or changes over time.
Benefit – flexible, multiple types of rubrics, provides clear expectations of performance, and can be a direct measure.
Challenge – takes time to develop and can feel a little academic, but if introduced well, can be used in the co-curricular.

Survey
Most common assessment tool; can be paper or electronic format and can include both quantitative and qualitative questions.
Benefit – fairly simple to design and administer, can be a quick method to gather a good amount of data.
Challenge – it is easy for surveys to get too long, students receive lots of surveys for their feedback leading to survey fatigue, and to be effective surveys questions need to be well thought out.

Tests
Similar to an academic class, a test is an assessment in which the respondent is asked a question that has a correct answer, rather than their opinion or experience.
Benefit – is a direct measure of students' knowledge or learning, and can be used well with training or employment.
Challenge – can feel like a classroom measure and may not be appropriate for all situations.

Tracking
Keeping track of the number of students involved with an experience, program attendance, or how often a situation occurs.
Benefit – easy to do and easy to make comparisons from year to year.
Challenge – limited on what the information fully tells you, but can be part of the story.

Work Sample
Involves examples of student work or what they have done. Used best with a rubric or guideline to assess specific aspects.
Benefit – direct measure of students' accomplishments and what they have done.
Challenge – may be difficult to use with all students depending on their role and if they have some form of work that can be gathered.