Remote Teaching: Assessment Tools & Activities

Keep in mind that your choice of assessment tools should always relate back to the stated learning outcomes for your remote course. Wherever possible, think about how you will grade these activities in advance – otherwise, you might have students submit an assignment and then realize you have set an impossible task for the teaching assistants or for yourself. You can also develop grading rubrics to help with marking student submissions. Below are a few suggestions for assessment activities you can incorporate into a course's remote learning environment.

Remote Discussions
Remote discussions provide students with the opportunity to share, reflect, and collaborate on their learning processes.

Ideas for Use:
- Provide specific questions or prompts based on the course content or based on a relevant resource (article, reading, video, blog etc) to promote analytical and critical thinking.
- Have students formulate discussion questions, with each taking a different turn being the "facilitator".

Considerations:
- Provide remote discussion guidelines to ensure that the discussions are productive, respectful, useful learning tools.
- Provide clarity about your remote discussion expectations for participation. You might also want to include a requirement for students to each create a response and then respond to one another in the remote discussion. For example, you can divide students into four groups (A, B, C, and D). In discussion day #1, students from group A post their responses to the discussion question, while students from groups B, C, and D are required to respond to their colleagues' posts. Please see Ideas for Discussion Forums for more on using this type of assessment within your course.

Resources:
- Rubric for Discussion Participation
- Online discussion rubric by Dr. Susan Wegmann, Professor of Education and the Director of Program Development and Special Programs at the Baptist College of Florida
- Online discussion participation rubric by Dr. Kelvin Thompson
- Online discussion forum grading rubric
- https://www.purdue.edu/innovativelearning/supporting-instruction/portal/files/8.2_Sample_Discussion_Board_Rubric_LDT.pdf

Learning Portfolio
A learning portfolio is a compilation of student work that exhibits individual or collective effort, progress, skills obtained and competencies gained throughout the progression of a course. This may be done in partners or small groups (good for keeping students connected).

Ideas for Use:
- Ask students to create to a remote learning portfolio about how they are applying course concepts in their lives or create remote ways to apply the content and have students document their applications and submit a portfolio.
- Single type of assignment curated into a common structure.
- Multiple types of assignments curated into a common structure.

Considerations:
- Guidelines are helpful.
- Portfolios can also be created using blogging tools like WordPress.

Resources:
> [Read more on developing portfolios](#)

Self-Performance Assessment

A self-performance assessment requires students to gather information about, reflect, and objectively report on their own performance to improve their work.

Ideas for Use:
- Students assess their performance based on the frequency & engagement of contributions to group remote discussions.
- Students use criteria to assess their paper prior to submission and write a paragraph of additional comments about how their self-performance assessment informed and improved the paper.
- Students create their own criteria based on the course outcomes, create their own and compare their work to the criteria they created and justify the mark they assign themselves.

Considerations:
- Provide, or co-create with your students, a rubric with pre-defined criteria based on the learning outcomes.

Case study analysis

A case study presents students with a real-life or hypothetical scenario which is specific to the discipline and potentially what students might face in their careers. Case studies can be multidisciplinary and provide opportunities for students to apply concepts, research and evaluate other sources of information, work in groups, and present their ideas. Cases can be simple and short to long and complex.

A quality case study has the following characteristics:
- there is no one clear answer or solution
- has sufficient information to promote a thorough analysis
- requires the student to think critically and analytically to recommend potential solutions

Assessment strategies for remote case studies
- Post the case study in Blackboard and each student submits their response under Assignments.
- Present the case study in Blackboard and then have students work in groups using the Blackboard discussion board. Individual students can be assessed through their discussion contributions and a submitted assignment. Students could also complete the case as groups and submit a group assignment.
- Present a case through Panopto video, divide the class into discussion groups using Blackboard and after each day of the course ask a question about new content and have the group relate it to the case study.
- To assist workload, you can have students submit their answers in groups, alternate the weeks of their posts, or have them rate each other's posts using a shared rubric.

Resources:
- https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/learning-teaching/teaching-resources/teach-a-course/case-method.pdf
- https://www.chronicle.com/article/Teaching-Students-to-Write-a/128097
- https://carleton.ca/experientialeducation/case-studies-assessment/
- https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessment-case-studies-and-scenarios

Scaffolded project (individual or group)

You can also set up scaffolded research projects in online learning environments. One week, students can be asked to upload a link to a resource and a description of that link. The following week, they could post a choice of two course concepts that could be applied to explain or analyze certain elements of the resource as well as definitions of those concepts. The next week, students could post one analytic post applying one of the concepts to their resource. The idea here is that each week, students would add to what they did the previous week. This would maintain engagement and break up their tasks, while ensuring that the grading is spaced out over a longer period of time.

Online quiz

Online quizzes can be multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or short answer questions.

Ideas for Use:
- You can give a pre-quiz to assess student knowledge about the content before you start teaching or after a session to clarify learning and muddiest points.
- You can embed your quiz into the course content so that students are frequently checking their comprehension of materials. Within Blackboard Learn you can automate the feedback and guidance that students receive.

Considerations:
- Students may not have access to reliable internet and will have access to a variety of resources.

Annotated bibliography

An annotated bibliography assignment requires students to summarize the most relevant literature on a course topic, making it a good choice for learning one topic in depth. Students develop skills in locating literature, analyzing the quality of articles, understanding the arguments being made, and summarizing them in a brief description.

Ideas for Use:
- You can have the entire class contribute to creating a large, annotated online library of academic articles and/or books that are relevant for your course.
- Students can be divided up into groups and the groups can take turns contributing their annotated additions to the course library.

Considerations:
- A wiki may be useful for students to post their work for this assessment.

News article critique

Critiquing a current news article can be a meaningful learning experience as news articles are relevant and provide opportunity for critical analysis. Students will need to either critique a selected news article, or find one based on specific criteria to critique. This type of assignment can be used to assess students' ability to identify credible news sources, research and provide other sources of supporting or contradicting information, express and justify their positions, and clearly communicate their ideas.

Ideas for Use:
- You can have students maintain weekly posts in the online learning environment where they are monitoring, commenting on, or responding to current policy debates or news events that relate to the course content.
- They can follow one on-going policy discussion or news story and add to their analysis of it each week as they learn new content.

Considerations:
- Provide examples of a news article critique and use the discussion board to discuss the elements of a good critique and news source. - Post a rubric or assessment criteria to help guide students work
- Break the class into small discussion groups to provide each other with peer feedback
- Use the Blackboard Dropbox for students to submit their assignment
- Give students the option of using media to complete their assignment (such as recording a video or creating an infographic)

Resources
- > https://education.uwsp.edu/135/assignments/media_critique/
- > http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/smithrd/100/critique.htm

Concept Maps

Concept map is a visual organization and representation of how different concepts or ideas are intertwined and connected. It is a visual teaching tool to organize and structure knowledge to deepen understanding and comprehension. Concept maps can also be used to assess students' knowledge and comprehension of abstract and complex concepts.

Ideas for Use:
- It could be an individual assignment or a collaborative group assignment.
- Students could draw concept maps using pens and paper or create maps digitally.
- Get students to write a short paragraph explaining the concept map they've created or reflecting on the process.
- Provide specific instructions and expectations such as a grading rubric for this assignment.

Resources:
Digital concept mapping tools:
- > Mindomo - mindomo.com
- > Coggle - coggle.it
- > Lucidchart - lucidchart.com
- > Miro - miro.com

Using concept maps for assessment:
- > Assessing & evaluating concept maps
- > The use of concept maps for assessment

Rubrics:
- > University of Waterloo
- > Rubric for assessing concept maps

Read about it: Alexaner, M. (2014). Using concept maps in assessment. [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://medicine.iu.edu/blogs/meded-matters/using-concept-maps-in-assessment

5-minute Assessment Interviews

A time-limited phone call or video call between you and a student where you engage the student in a Q&A or a discussion and provide them with feedback/grade.

Ideas for Use:
- See 5-minute Interviews Information Table

Audio or Video Creation

An audio or video creation uses audio or video recording to capture student self-expression and analytical skills in creative ways. This is NOT a recording of a student reading a traditional paper.

Ideas for Use:
- This assignment can be done individually (a voice memo) or collaboratively (conducting interviews).

- Projects can take a variety of different forms including having students create instructional how-to videos, interview segments, story-based media to illustrate a concept, or even short music videos.

Considerations:
- Keep it simple, have students use their phones to record a 3-5-minute product.
- Require students to write a script they will submit alongside their project.
- Use a rubric to grade their final podcast assignment.

Resources

Assignment Design
- > Sample Voice Memo Assignment
- > Essay Assignment - Podcast

Rubric ideas
- > AACU Oral Communication VALUE Rubric
- > Podcast Rubric
- > Another Podcast Rubric

Read about it
- > Kaziewicz, J. (2012, April 24). Podcasting in the classroom [Blog post]. Retrieved from http://at.blogs.wm.edu/podcasting-in-the-classroom/

Papers

Students show how they can interpret, compare, or summarize existing ideas in writing

Ideas for Use:
- > See More on Papers

I have chosen assessments that will best suit my course content and remote format - how do I assign marks?

A note on Rubrics - You can develop grading rubrics to help with marking student submissions. A rubric is a scoring guide used to evaluate based on predefined criteria that aligns with the course outcomes. Best practice is that the criteria on the marking rubrics is shared with the students in some manner when the assessment activity is given so students are aware of the expectations.

> Assessment Rubric Checklist - https://teaching.usask.ca/documents/distance-education/Assessment-Rubric-Checklist.pdf

> Assessment Rubric Template - https://teaching.usask.ca/documents/distance-education/Assessment-Template.docx

> https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/assessing-student-work/grading-and-feedback/rubrics-useful-assessment-tools