Teaching Commons

A GUIDE TO ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS

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Introduction

This guide is designed to help instructors design and implement alternative assessments. At the beginning of the guide you will find a section dedicated to Best Practices and a section dedicated to Accessibility Considerations. Following are 33 identified alternative assessment. Each alternative assessment page contains a description, the benefits, challenges and solutions, examples, rubrics, and resources. The resources section contains links to articles and guides and when available links to technology tools that would facilitate the implementation of the said assessment.

Please not that this document is a work in progress.

Special thanks to all the educational developers, teaching and learning centers, and higher education scholars around the globe. This work wouldn't have been possible without all the resources available and shared online.

Leading Practices

Consider the following best practices when you are designing alternative assessment:

Choice of topics

- Consider choosing Interdisciplinary topics
- When possible, allow the students to choose a topic of interest/ a topic they are passionate about

Documentation

- Provide documentation (how to)
- Provide resources for versatile skills such as presentation skills
- Provide a detailed description of how the assignment will be graded and / or examples of high-quality student work
- Allow time and space for questions about the documentation
- When needed, consider providing the students with a list of recording software as well as editing software and tutorials for them
- Encourage students to use free pictures, cite their sources, and acknowledge their guests
- Release forms: Check if you need students to sign forms or ask their guests to sign release forms
- Provide students with templates for recruitment emails and an informed consent document to use with interviewees
- Remind students to give credit to anyone who helps them
- Consider determining an average time for each task

Grading and feedback

Prepare a structured marking sheet for peer assessment

- Allow the students to co-construct the rubric: this will involve the students and give them ownership of the rubric
- Plans intervals for feedback and submission
- Provide opportunities for practice, for example allow low stakes assignment (reflective pieces, concept maps)
- When assessing reflective submission, only evaluate the content
- For longer assessment, decide whether you want to see all of the work that students have submitted formatively over the term, or a selection of the submissions
- Make the rules clear in advance (how will you grade students who don't submit for feedback, late submissions)
- Set guidelines for the length of responses

Group/individual work

- Determine whether you will allow group presentation or individual presentation
- Develop a Protocol for Collaboration
- Consider devoting time for team building, provide guidelines for appropriate interactions

Creating a safe space and a trusting relationship with students

- Share personal experience/examples when possible to build a trusting relationship with your students
- You can create a podcast yourself for a podcast assignment
- Allow students the option of anonymity
- Keep in mind that students might live in different time zones or have restrictions as to when they can access a computer
- Have contingency plans if students have technical difficulties while taking the exams
- Ask students whether you can use their artifacts in following courses

Accessibility and Inclusion Considerations

Consider the following questions when you are designing alternative assessment:

- How will you support students who aren't confident in their spoken English or their accent? Or students who struggle with technology?
- Will you provide alternative forms of assessment for students for accessibility reasons?
- How might we mitigate anxiety or other stresses for students?

How will you address the following concerns when doing face to face assessment:

- Bias from interviewers
- Bias of interpretation
- Subjectivity of interviewees
- Concerns about bias toward students' dress, gender, ethnicity or educational background

Also consider the following steps:

- Caption all videos
- Provide alt text for images
- Avoid using tables for formatting (they don't translate well with screen readers)
- Use headings (screen readers scan based on headings and styles instead of bold formatting)
- Provide an informative text with the links (Links are read out loud by screen readers)
- Don't use color alone to convey meaning
- Provide the option to publish on the public-facing course website under a pseudonym

Check the alternative assessment guide prepared by Damian Gordon for more information about accessibility considerations of some of the alternative assessments.

1. Annotated Anthology or Course Reader

Description

Students are asked to prepare a thematic anthology. Students choose the theme and choose the items to include in the anthology based on the course readings. Students then write an introduction to the anthology and an introduction to each of the items.

The course reader requires students to organize the readings chronologically to develop the theme they have chosen. For more elaborate assignments, you can also ask the students to include assignments to go with the readings, suggestions for further reading, and so on.

Benefits

Allows the learner to:

- engage with the text in a more meaningful way
- capture what they think is important in a reading
- practice skills such as noticing patterns, synthesizing new thinking, and asking questions

Allows the instructor to:

- distinguish who is reading, who is understanding the text, and who is making personal meaning
- diagnose the needs of the learners who don't comprehend the text
- assess what learners understand about the content and how they determine what is important

Examples

Example about a mini digital anthology

Rubric

Rubric for a poetry anthology project

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Information about an annotated class anthology using hypothes.is.

2. Annotated Portfolio of work throughout the term

Description

Students are provided with a series of incremental formative tasks during the term. The instructor provides feedback on each of the tasks. The student modifies the ask based on the feedback. At the end of the term, students submit the final assessment with the formative tasks and a reflection outlining their thought process, the feedback they received and how they implemented it.

Benefits

- Allows continuous engagement with the course material
- Gives the students an opportunity to get early feedback and practice
- Encourages skills of revision and improvement

Examples

- Example of annotated transcript from a Masters student

Rubric

- EPortfolio (Digital Portfolio) Rubric from University of Wisconsin-Stout
- A rubric for eportfolio
- Another rubric for eportfolio (University of Ottawa Faculty of Medicine)

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Annotated student portfolio

3. Annotated Research Bibliography with Introduction

Description

Students compile a bibliography on a problem or question. They must read the works, evaluate their accuracy and helpfulness, and provide an explanatory introduction to the bibliography.

Examples of the tasks that students need to do are: write an introduction to the bibliography, read the works, evaluate them, compare the multiple sources, compare the authors' points of view, check the biases, and so on.

Benefits

- Allows students to engage with the relevant literature
- Limits plagiarism

Challenges

Not all students are aware which sources to choose
Solution: Set clear parameters

- What is the number of items you want students to find?
- What kind of sources are acceptable? (Peer reviewed only? Popular culture? Websites? Newspapers and magazines? Primary sources?)
- What is the location of acceptable sources? (Will you refuse items which aren't in our library, or which have been published in a certain country?)

Consult with your subject librarian

Examples

- Example of annotated bibliography assignment

Rubric

- Annotated Bibliography Rubric - assessment of information literacy

Resources

Guides & Articles

Using annotated bibliography to assess learning

4. Blogs/Vlogs (Social Pedagogies)

Description

A Blog (short for web log) is a frequently updated online diary.
A Vlog is an online diary based on video entries.

Benefits

- Personal: allows for students' voice
- Part of the "confessional culture"
- Allows students to practice new literacies
- Hard to plagiarize
- Has a dynamic nature: easily augmented
- Facilitates easy sharing
- Practice effective communication and explaining
- Empowers the learners to share their voices

Challenges

- Marking could be time consuming
- Some students might be shy or uneasy with creating vlogs
- Lack of technical expertise

Examples

- International development example
- Pedagogy example
- Writing program example
- Internship assessment via vlog example:(contains sample work from students)
- Other examples can include: a museum tour for Arts class, a vlog through an experiment for sciences class, an oral analysis of poetry for literature classes, and a vlog in target language for a language class.

Rubric

- Blog essay rubric
- Blog assessment rubric
- A Rubric for Evaluating Student Blogs from University of Wisconsin - Stout
- Vlog rubric from University of Central Florida

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Watch the video of Indiana University professor Justin Hodgson introducing vlogging for his "Professional Writing Skills" course assignment

Technology Tools

- Learn more about websites for blogging and vlogging

5. Briefs

Description

Students are asked to summarize a course reading for a target audience of their choice and add their own interpretation of the main ideas in 400–500 words. You could ask students to write a policy brief or alternatively analyze an already written policy brief.

Benefits

Dr. Gigi Luk outlines the benefits and challenges of using briefs in Beyond Grading: Assessment Strategies from McGill Instructors – G. Luk.

Examples

- Politics Brief
- Examples prepared by students: Example 1, Example 2, Example 3

Rubric

- Policy Brief Rubric

Resources

Guides & Articles

- An example from McGill professor Dr. Gigi Luk
- A handout for students from North Carolina University
- A resource on writing policy briefs and reports from University of Toronto

6. Case Studies

Description

Case studies consist of fictional scenarios that ask students to solve a dilemma.
There are many types of case studies: a) Detailed / Extensive case studies, b) Descriptive / Narrative cases, c) Mini cases, d) Bullet cases, e) Directed choice cases, f) Multiple choice cases

Benefits

- Engage students in research and reflective discussion
- Provide a safe environment for students
- Allow students to develop real solutions to real problems
- Allow peer learning
- Could be done individually or by teams

Challenges

Challenges of Case-Based Teaching by Mark P. Mostert

Examples

- A list of various case studies in Sciences, Engineering, Mathematics, Medicine, Nursing, Business and Law compiled by The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning at the University of Manitoba.
- Collections of examples of case studies from Biology, Business, Economics, Environmental Science, Health Sciences, Political Science, and Sociology.
- Open cases from University of British Columbia.
- Forestry: In this assignment, students in a graduate course wrote their own case studies. This link provides information on the assignment, a handout given to the students, and a grading rubric.
- Political Science: Students in a third-year political science class responded to a case study written by the instructor. They worked in groups to create action plans for climate change problems.

Rubric

Case study grading rubric from the University of Charleston.

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Assembling a case study tool kit: 10 tools for teaching with cases by Annie Prud'homme-Genereux
- Assessment of case studies and scenarios from UNSW Sydney.
- Case studies from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

7. Digital Storytelling

Description

Students are asked to combine narration and multimedia to create digital content that tells a story.

Benefits

Allows every student to tell their own story and connect it to the course content.

Challenges

- Students may be unfamiliar with various technology tools and may require additional support
- Consider implications of privacy and intellectual property (copyright) when sharing digital content beyond a classroom/course assessment
- Grading may include marks for content as well as technical execution – consider how you will weight these elements based on your unique learning outcomes
- Students' stories can be very personal – have a plan for how you might support students who may share sensitive, personal content with you

Examples

The power of storytelling to engage students by Alwiya Omar from Indiana University Bloomington.

Rubric

- Digital Story Grading Rubric from Western Oregon University.
- Digital Storytelling Rubric from UBC.
- Digital Storytelling Grading Rubric from Northern Arizona University.

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Digital storytelling tips and resources by Gail Matthews-DeNatale from Simmons College.
- Digital storytelling resources for instructors by York University Libraries – Digital Scholarship Centre
- Resources for students: Create a digital story

Technology Tools

- Microsoft Sway
- Art based stories: Storybird
- Comic strips: Make Beliefs Comix
- Create digital books: Book Creator

8. Concept Maps

Description

Concept maps are a visual representation of connections between concepts that students have learned.

Benefits

- Encourages learners to think visually and verbally about how concepts are related
- Some instructors report they can be assessed for grading quickly
- Can include peer review component

Challenges

Not all students are familiar with concept maps
Solution: Provide opportunities for the students to practice

- Ask students to create weekly concept maps of their learning
- Ask the students to create a concept map for the entire course
- Give students a "fill in the gaps" concept map for them to fill during lecture time
- Give the students a list of terms to organize into a concept map

Examples

- Watch screencast with Dr. Mark Morton (University of Waterloo) on how instructors can use concept mapping tools to support student learning in different disciplines
- Read the perspective of Chris Ray, a student from University of Waterloo Perspective: Notes v. Maps: Trading Quantity for Quality

Rubric

- Rubric for Assessing Concept Maps from University of Waterloo
- Rubric for Graphic Organizers - Inspiration Diagrams/Concept Maps from University of Wisconsin - Stout

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Concept Mapping Tools from University of Waterloo
- A comprehensive guide to concept maps from Lucidchart
- Health Sciences and Gerontology professor Josephine McMurry explains how she uses concept maps in her classes in her video.

Technology Tools

- MindMeister
- Cmap
- VUE
- Flowchart maker and online diagram software

9. Digital Artifacts

Description

Students are asked to create a digital artifact as a standalone assessment or to complement their essays. A digital artefact can take the form of short videos or podcasts, TED talks, posters, blog posts, Wikipedia articles, drawings or songs, or let the students decide on the form, they might surprise you!

Benefits

- Provides a high level of authenticity
- Helps prepare students for the job market skills
- Allows students to showcase their creativity

Examples

Law: Dr. Leslie-Anne Duvic-Paoli asked students to explain legal concepts through digital artifacts, the submissions included videos, poems, posters, twitter threads, and legal briefs.

Rubric

Video project rubric - University of Wisconsin - Stout

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Multimodal artefacts in higher education
- Digital Explanation as Assessment in University Science

10. Error Analysis/ Find The Error/ Flaw

Description

Students are asked to identify the error or the flaw in a given set of data or exercise.

Benefits

Allows students to demonstrate their ability to find errors in sets of data, problem solving questions, or arguments.

Challenges

Creating answers with flaws can be time consuming.
Solution: consider asking students to contribute to the creation of assessment content

Rubric

- General information about rubrics and different examples.

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Teaching students error analysis: A pathway to critical thinking
- A collaborative approach to mistake analysis

11. Fact Sheet

Description

A fact sheet is a one-page document that provides important information about a topic.

Benefits

Allows students to:

- learn to search the relevant databases for the discipline
- evaluate material
- present information in a concise and readable way

Examples

Geography example

Fact sheet could be implemented in multiple disciplines:

- Health (smoking, COVID-19, HIV, etc.)
- Economics or Sociology (school board budgets or trends in enrollment)
- History or Politics (fact sheet on a certain war, election, unrest)
- Science or Engineering (fact sheet on a new structure, procedure, discovery)

Rubric

- Assessment rubric for general factsheet
- Agricultural factsheet rubric

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Fact sheets and policy briefs by Teaching Excellence and Innovation from Wilfrid Laurier University

12. Fake News Assignment

Description

Fake news are at the heart of the assignment. Assessment includes identifying fake news related to their discipline, debunking fake news, addressing fake news, designing a fake news module, organizing a debate, and so on.

Benefits

- Allows the students to practice being media literate
- Students can choose their topic of interest
- Keeps the students up-to-date

Examples

- English language learners example
- STEM example
- Fake news assignment example

Rubric

- General information about rubrics and different examples.

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Fake news, misleading news, biased news: Assignments on evaluating sources

Technology Tools

Fact-checking sites:

- FactCheck.org
- Snopes.com
- Politifact.com

13. Field Expert Interview

Description

A field expert interview consists of one or all of the following: creating interview questions, reaching out to a field expert, conducting the interview, synthesizing, and publishing the interview content.

Benefits

Students can practice interview, communication, and organizational skills.

Challenges

Students might struggle to find or contact an expert in the field
Solution: Prepare a back up list of potential experts to interview and provide support to student in writing interview request emails to interviewees

Examples

- Example 1

Rubric

- Examples of rubrics for expert interview project

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Calling Brussels: Revisiting an innovative interview assignment
- Vicarious learning through informational interviews: A new experiential learning tool

14. Flexible Assessment

Description

Flexible assessment is competency-based, the students choose their preferred method of assessment to prove how they have met the learning outcomes of the course. There are multiple ways to be flexible in assessment such as flexibility in timeline, weighting (plussage), and format. You can read more about the multiple forms of flexibility in assessment.

Benefits

Flexible assessment is inclusive, learning-focused, transparent, and shared.

Challenges

Different assessments have different technology requirements
Solution: Keep things accessible to allow all students access to all the different assessment formats.

Examples

- Flexible assessment: One instructor's implementation in a large class at McGill
- Bento and buffet: Two approaches to flexible summative assessment by Nicky Didicher at Simon Fraser

Rubric

Consider the following resources to create your own rubric

- All about rubrics
- A rubric for rubrics.

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Flexible assessment for a hybrid model
- Flexible learning resource
- Rethinking assessment in the flexible era
- Flexible assessment: Student voices in learning
- Examining increased flexibility in assessment formats

15. Historical Trial

Description

A historical trial is a mock trial of a historical figure.

Benefits

- Allows students to practice inquiry and exploration
- Allows students to develop research skills
- Provides opportunities for students to cultivate critical evaluation, analytical, and assessment skills

Challenges

Examples

The People vs. Columbus, et al.

Language:

- present opening and closing arguments for trials based on literary works
- students analyze a literary trial
- analyze the text in and of itself
- compare the proceedings in the text with those in the film version
- determine how historically and legally accurate the literary trial is

History and Civics:

- create new witness lists and questions for a trail of a famous figure
- develop outlines for the prosecution and defense of a historical figure (President Stalin for example), students could think about how a different verdict could have changed the world we now know
- lists the plaintiff(s), defendant(s), witnesses and evidence
- students make storyboards for an imagined criminal case in the current crime section in the news

The Arts:

- Cases of plagiarism (e.g. Bob Dylan case) for song lyrics, music, paintings, other art work. A trial would enact the defense and the prosecution
- Deconstruct the scene of trials in contemporary television shows or movies. For example, students can watch "A Few Good Men" or "Philadelphia,". You can find an example of deconstructing.

Science and Math:

- Students research a scientific theory and put it on trial. Example trial of Galileo.

Rubric

- Historical Role Play Rubric: Manor Court Trial
- Historical Understanding Rubric

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Mock trials in the history classroom?
- Running a mock trial
- Handout for students: Preparing for a mock trial

16. Infographic

Description

An infographic is a visual representation of information. There are different types of infographics. You could provide the topics or alternatively ask students to generate the topics.

Benefits

- Allows students to practice inquiry and exploration
- Allows students to develop research skills
- Provides opportunities for students to cultivate critical evaluation, analytical, and assessment skills

Challenges

- Students might not be prepared for the effort and time needed to create infographics
  Solution: a) Provide opportunities for students for topic development to determine the intended audience, the reason for, the goal(s) of, and the focus for the infographic and b) allow scaffolded feedback
- Student might have difficulties condensing and organizing large amounts of information or with properly representing the meaning of the information
  Solution: a) Provide examples of good and bad infographic design; b) Include an opportunity for the student to refine the focus of research. You could begin with research and inquiry into an issue, topic, or question and allow the students to revisit the topic; c) Provide multiple forms of feedback (instructor, peer, and self-evaluation)
- Students might struggle with improper use of visual displays of information
  Solution: a) Provide the students with resources that show what good representation is and b) provide multiple opportunities for feedback

Examples

An example from McGill Department of Physiology, and an Example from Penn State.

Rubric

- A Crowdsourced Rubric for Evaluating Infographics by Derek Bruff
- Rubric for Graphic Organizers - Inspiration Diagrams/Concept Maps by Dr. Karen Franker from University of Wisconsin - Stout

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Elements of an effective infographic assignment
- Thesis by Glen Bruce Gover, Eastern Kentucky University: Teacher Thoughts on Infographics as Alternative Assessment: A Post-Secondary Educational Exploration

17. Lay Translation Assignment

Description

Lay translation assignment consists of three stages. First, students read a piece of scientific scholarship and write an essay in a way that is understandable by lay readers. Second, the instructor assembles a panel of lay readers who give feedback to the students. Finally, the students resubmit their work based on the feedback.

Benefits

- Allows students to write concisely
- Gives students time and feedback to improve

Challenges

Finding lay readers can be difficult and after participating several times, lay readers become less "lay"
Solution: consider recruiting lay readers periodically and have a list of volunteer lay readers available

Examples

Lay translation assignment from Pharmacology

Rubric

- Lay summary rubric

Resources

Guides & Articles

- What makes a good lay summary
- How to write a lay summary
- Science communication to the general public
- Guidelines for lay summaries

Technology tools

Readability tests

- WebFX Readability Test Tool
- Readability Formulas
- Readable – Test Your Readability

18. Letter to the Editor/ Memo (Memorandum)

Description

Letter to the editor is a written piece intended to be published. Letters to the editors are usually short. Writers tend to support or take a position against an issue or simply inform. Letters could be based on facts or emotions. A Memo is a short written piece used to convey information to a colleague.

Benefits

- Introduce students to public rhetoric
- Allow students to develop digital citizenship
- Provides a good synthesising exercise
- Provides opportunities for authentic assessment
- Helps students find their own voice and practise being more sensitive to diversity

Challenges

- Students might not want to publish using their real name
  Solution: allow anonymity
- Students might not be interested in the topics provided
  Solution: Allow the students to choose the topic
- Students' opinion might lack inclusion
  Solution: ask the students to write a list of who this letter might impact and in what way

Examples

Letter to the editor

- York University political science example

Memos

- Example of policy memo assignment, writing guide, and revision checklist

Rubric

- Letter to the editor writing rubric

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Teaching controversies: The letter to the editor
- Tips on writing a letter to the editor
- Community Toolbox: Section 2. Writing Letters to the Editor

19. News/Research Article Critique

Description

Breaking down and evaluating the pieces of an article.

Benefits

- Allows students to practice 21st century skills
- Allows students to develop critical analysis
- Provides students opportunities to develop their communication skills

Challenges

Examples

- Article Analysis Assignment Example
- Critical Review of a Journal Article: An Assessment Activity
- Multi-stage Assignment: The "Explainer Article"
- Article Review
- Research Paper Critique
- Top 5 Research Papers

Rubric

- Rubric from Cornel College
- Critical Review Grading Rubric from University of Toronto

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Complete Guide on Article Analysis (with 1 Analysis Example)
- Critique/Review of Research Article from Writing Support Services, University of Calgary

20. Op-Ed Piece to be Sent to Local Newspaper

Description

Op-Ed, short for Opposite the Editorial, is a newspaper opinion piece from contributors not affiliated with the editorial board. Op-Ed is a real-world writing skill. You can ask your students to write an op-ed. Alternatively, you can ask your students to find an op-ed and analyze it.

Benefits

- Allows students to practice 21st century skills
- Allows students to develop understanding of both sides of an issue
- Provides students opportunities to develop understanding of the audience of a given topic

Examples

Infrastructural Design Example from Cornell University
Sample Op-Ed Assignment in Writing from Boston University

Rubric

Rubric for Op-ed Essays from Boston University
Op-Ed Rubric

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Handout from Kent State University: Assignment Type: Op-Ed
- The Op-Ed Project: Op-ed Writing: Tips and Tricks

21. Open Pedagogy: Open Online Resources

Description

Through open pedagogy, students are asked to create content to share or release as open educational resources. Robin (2018) described that open pedagogy assignments differ in the degree of openness and could range from creating/editing a Wikipedia page to creating open books.
Students can take multiple roles in open pedagogy such as a) Students as textbook creators, b) Students as question bank authors, and c) Students as producers. Find examples of the different roles of students.

Benefits

- Allows better collaboration between students themselves and between the instructor and students
- Enables students to publish their work
- Students feel supported and empowered
- Provides an opportunity for authentic mentorship
- Give the students the opportunity to engage in public conversations with experts

Challenges

Not all students have access to broadband
Solution: provide alternative forms of assessment
It is a new territory for some students
Solution: provide documentation and support

Examples

- Open Case Studies at UBC
- Open Pedagogy Notebook
    - An information guide for Health Sciences: An Ecological Approach to Obesity and Eating Disorders
    - Create a renewable website: Non-majors Science Students as Content Creators

Rubric

Depending on the project, you need to design a rubric that looks at content, collaboration, and design. Consider the following resources to create your own rubric

- All about rubrics
- A rubric for rubrics

Resources

Guides & Articles

- A guide to making open textbooks with students
- Open Pedagogy Toolkit from Purdue University
- OpenLearn Create: Day 14 – Renewable assignments
- The Open Educational Resources Starter Kit

Technology Tools

- Hypothes.is: allows users to annotate websites and online readings easily
- Wikibooks and WikiEdu: allow students to create a text
- Wikipedia: allows students to create projects such as annotated bibliographies. Students add context and citations to short or underdeveloped articles
- Google Drive: allows students to collaboratively create presentations, and spreadsheets
- YouTube: allows students to create instructional videos (supplemental course materials for explaining difficult concepts)

22. Oral Examination

Description

Oral assessment refers to any assessment of student learning that is conducted partially or fully using the spoken word. Oral examination can take multiple forms:

Oral assessment as standalone

- Oral assessment with/without preparation open/closed book
- Student presentation

Oral assessment based on previously prepared work

- Oral presentation based on paper/synopsis
- Oral presentation based on project report
- Oral presentation based on portfolio

Read more about the different forms of oral assessments

Benefits

- Provides an opportunity for interaction
- Allows more connection between the students and the instructor
- Opportunity for clarification of ambiguous questions in the moment

Challenges

- Undue anxiety for some students, some students need to be accommodated with alternative assessments
- Students with hearing or speech difficulties may require adjustments
- Lack of anonymity for the examiner
- There are concerns about bias toward students' dress, gender, ethnicity or educational background
- Some students might not be familiar with this kind of assessment
- There might be concerns with keeping a record of the examination

Examples

- Introduction Pecha Kutcha Oral Presentations
- Providing an Oral Examination as an Authentic Assessment in a Large Section, Undergraduate Diversity Class
- Using Oral Exams as an Assessment Method in Engineering Courses

Rubric

- Rubrics for Oral Presentations
- Grading Rubric for Oral Exams (Midterm and Final) in Upper Division History Course

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Guidelines for Oral Assessments and Exams
- A Short Guide to Oral Assessment

23. Podcast

Description

Ask the student to create a podcast to showcase their learning (an audio recording that is available online). You could ask the students to: a) Create a podcast about a specific topic, b) Search for 2-3 relevant podcasts and justify why they are useful, c) Search for 2-3 relevant podcasts and critically review them, and d) Search for 2-3 relevant podcasts and create 5-7 questions to aid reflection on it

Benefits

- Authentic assessment
- Students practice public speaking
- Students practice digital literacy

Examples

- Physics: Dr. Eva Philippaki, King's University London: Podcasting the findings of a Physics experiment
- Ecology: Prof. Chris buddle, McGill: Hear this! Podcasts as an assessment tool in higher education

Rubric

- Podcast Rubric

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Short Assignment: Designing, writing and producing a short podcast
- Teaching with learner-created podcasts
- Success criteria for a podcast
- Resources for students: Recording a podcast

Technology Tools

- Garageband software and tutorial via LinkedIn Learning at York
- Audacity software and tutorial via LinkedIn Learning at York
- Mixpad
- Free music

24. Poster Sessions (with Peer Critique)

Description

In this type of assessment students are asked to create a poster (print or digital) to showcase their learning about a certain topic. Students present their posters to their peers and engage in critical discussions. Presentation could be face to face, through a face to face or virtual poster walk. Posters could also be individual or group projects.

Benefits

- Encourages creativity
- Helps develop communication skills
- Involves students in the assessment
- Encourages students to investigate deeper
- Encourages peer-learning
- Gives an opportunity to explore misconceptions

Challenges

A poster assessment might be unfamiliar to some students
Solution: Provide documentation, good examples, and poor examples to students
Student might spend more time on the visual effects and not the actual content
Solution: Provide milestones for the students to follow and scaffold the tasks
Assessor might be affected by the visual effects
Solution: Create a detailed rubric

Examples

- Implementation of Online Poster Sessions in Online and Face-to-Face Classrooms as a Unique Assessment Tool
- Thesis Statement: Poster Session

Rubric

- Poster Session Rubric

Resources

Guides & Articles

- The use of posters for assessment: A guide for staff by University College Dublin
- Two examples of the use of 'electronic posters'
- Using poster presentation to assess large classes
- More than science fair fun: Poster session as an experiential learning activity in the classroom

Technology Tools

You can create a gallery walk using media collection in eClass (Moodle)

25. Public Service Announcement

Description

A public service announcement (PSA) is a message (written, or auditory, or visual) designed to educate the public. Stations broadcast public service announcements for free in order to fulfill their obligation to serve the public. It usually serves to raise awareness about a social issue.
Examples of PSAs are: Pollution and Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk.

Benefits

- Provides an opportunity for authentic assessment
- Applies positive peer pressure
- Allows students to develop professional skills such as preparation, rehearsal, and appropriate use of visual aids
- Enhances professional verbal, visual, written communication skills
- Easily applied to many disciplines, including STEM

Challenges

Not all students may have access to equipment/technology required for successful completion
Solution: Assess student access to resources in advance, and establish connections to YU departments that make such resources available to students

Examples

Example: Using student-produced public service announcements to increase learning
PSA assignments can be incorporated into almost any subject matter. Here are a few examples:

- English – on a social issue raised in a play or book or exploring a different style of writing
- History – on an issue that occurred during the time being studied, e.g. factory conditions in the industrial revolution
- Science – on an issue such as climate change, water conservation, spread of disease
- Languages – on a social issue pertinent to a country that speaks the target language (in English or the target language)
- Education – on school choice
- Health – on washing hands and the spread of disease
- Political – on elections/gun control

Rubric

Public Service Announcement Rubric
PSA Rubric

Resources

Guides & Articles

- PSA Checklist for Students

26. Professional Presentation

Description

This kind of presentation is similar to the professional presentation that a consultant gives to a community group. You could ask the students to prepare a presentation or look for 2/3 presentations to analyze.

Benefits

- Provides an opportunity for authentic assessment
- Applies positive peer pressure
- Allows students to develop professional skills such as preparation, rehearsal, and appropriate use of visual aids
- Enhances professional verbal, visual, written communication skills
- Easily applied to many disciplines, including STEM

Challenges

Not all students may have access to equipment/technology required for successful completion
Solution: Assess student access to resources in advance, and establish connections to YU departments that make such resources available to students

Accessibility Considerations

Provide alternative modes for students to present such as a) In front of the entire class, b) In small groups, c) One-on-one with yourself, or d) Allow students to create a video recording of their presentation to be shown in class

Examples

- **Architecture and City and Regional Planning**: students often present their projects to a simulated "community board."
- Make a presentation to the local library board arguing for the inclusion of certain books in the library, based on the **reading for the semester**

Rubric

- Scoring rubrics for professional presentations
- Scoring rubrics for professional writing

Resources

Guides & Articles

Creating video resources at York University

Technology Tools

Students could use any presentation software: PowerPoint narration tutorial, record a presentation through Zoom tutorial, Cellphilm tutorial.

27. Reflective Journals/Logs

Description

Ask students to provide an account and a reflection of their work in progress. A reflection journal/log could take multiple forms such as blogs, video, podcast, or a printed scrapbook.

Benefits

- Encourages students to participate
- Provides evidence of which concepts were understood and which ones need explaining
- Allows students to develop their critical skills

Challenges

- There is a need to establish trust relationships with the students
  Solution: Share personal experience/examples when possible
- Some students might need guidance and support to reach higher levels of reflection
  Solution: You could also give students prompts to think about for their reflective journals such as: a) Provide evidence of their progression through a learning journey, b) Identify their assumptions, c) Provide a critical evaluation of their learning, d) Identify critical moments in their learning, and e) Identify the impact of the readings, collaborative activities, exams, and the questioning of previous assumptions on their own learning.

Accessibility Considerations

Provide alternative modes for students to present such as a) In front of the entire class, b) In small groups, c) One-on-one with yourself, or d) Allow students to create a video recording of their presentation to be shown in class

Examples

- Psychology example

Rubric

- Rubric for reflection journals
- Rubric for reflective writing

Resources

Guides & Articles

- The benefits of reflective journal writing
- Reflection and assessment
- Field placement reflective learning log worksheet

28. Simulation/ Role Play

Description

Role Playing is the learning activity that involves the participants acting a real-life situation. The Centre for Teaching Excellence at Boston College defines simulations as "interactive experiences designed to teach students particular content or competencies by having them engage directly with the information or the skills being learned in a simulated authentic challenge."

Benefits

- provides a safe, supportive environment for students
- provides flexible and controllable environments
- Provides an opportunity to replicate the complexity and unpredictability of real-world contexts
- Creates an exciting and fun learning environment

Examples

Video Series - Using Role Plays in Formative Assessment - Ben Barry & Gail Trapp

Rubric

- Example of Marking Rubrics
- Example of Role Playing Rubric

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Assessing role plays and simulations
- Role play from Hong Kong University
- Simulations and role play
- How to teach using role-playing

29. Story Mapping

Description

Story mapping is the creation of a webpage that combines images, maps, and multimedia to showcase a topic.

Benefits

- Introduces the students to digital humanities
- Allows the students to showcase their thinking and the instructor to detect gaps in the students' thinking

Challenges

Not all students are familiar with story mapping
Solution: provide students with examples and documentation

Accessibility Considerations

Provide alternative modes for students to present such as a) In front of the entire class, b) In small groups, c) One-on-one with yourself, or d) Allow students to create a video recording of their presentation to be shown in class

Examples

- Mapping Air Raids: The Impact of WWII on Japan's Cities
- Liberal Arts: SOC 3090: County Story Maps

Rubric

Rubrics from University of Minnesota: Basic Rubric, Detailed Rubric, Final (Group) Rubric

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Instructional resources
- Guides for instructors: Focused Story Map Project (Individual) and Semester Long Story Map Project (Individual)

30. Student Interviews

Description

An interview assessment is a structured conversation. Interviews can be highly structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. In an interview assessment, you could ask students to: a) Create a series of interview questions for a specific job or topic, b) Search for 2-3 relevant interview transcripts and justify why they are useful, c) Create a video of a simulated interview, d) Interview the students. You can also consider these approaches for the instructor-student interviews: a) Question List: provide a list of questions to the students beforehand, b) Discussion reflection: ask students to reflect on their prior learning, and c) Open conversation – you could pick a topic or allow the students to pick a topic and have a conversation about it.

Benefits

Provides in-depth information about student understanding

Challenges

- Time consuming
- Bias from interviewers
- Bias of interpretation
- Subjectivity of interviewees

Accessibility Considerations

Provide alternative modes for students to present such as a) In front of the entire class, b) In small groups, c) One-on-one with yourself, or d) Allow students to create a video recording of their presentation to be shown in class

Examples

- Chemistry example
- In-person technical interview example in computer science at McGill University

Rubric

- Create a rubric/checklist and have it with you during the interview to be able to track the conversation.
    - All about rubrics
    - A rubric for rubrics

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Using interviews to assess and mentor students
- 5-minute interview assessment
- Interviews as an assessment tool

31. Student-Proposed Project/ Student Designed Assessment

Description

Involve students in suggesting a course project they would like to undertake, designing exam questions, reading questions or even entire assignments. Students can choose a project or assessment they feel would demonstrate their learning.

Benefits

- Demonstrates students' understanding of the material
- Elicit student thinking
- Is more sensitive to students' individual learning needs
- Can be used to generate feedback for students to improve their thinking

Challenges

Plagiarism in questions
Solution: a) Ask students to provide questions related to real life situations, b) ask students to document their thought process with their questions

Students whom questions were not chosen for inclusion in the exam might feel left out
Solution: a) Turn the submissions into conceptual maps and share with the classroom, b) Use the students' submissions to connect ideas between questions, c) Ask students to link their submissions to real world applications around them or that might be of interest to them, d) Use student-generated questions to initiate discussions in the classroom

Accessibility Considerations

Provide alternative modes for students to present such as a) In front of the entire class, b) In small groups, c) One-on-one with yourself, or d) Allow students to create a video recording of their presentation to be shown in class

Examples

- Political science professor at University of Waterloo, Veronica Kitchen, asked her students to write assessment exams, read about her experience.
- Biochemistry professors included student generated reading questions in their course. Read about their experience.
- Student-generated questions to assess learning in an online orientation to Pharmacy course. Read about the experience.

Rubric

- Example 1

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Using Student-Generated Questions to Promote Deeper Thinking
- Strategy Bites: Student-generated questions from McGill

32. Take Home Exam/ Open Book Exam

Description

In take home exams/Open Book Examination the students are allowed to have access to books, papers and on-line content. Different designs include: a) Ask students to undertake a take-home exam that the instructor designs or b) Ask the students to design an open book exam

Benefits

- Allows for assessment of higher order learning (e.g., application, analysis, evaluation, creation)
- Develops information literacy skills
- Mimics actual professional activities where students can have access to information
- Less anxiety provoking for some students

Challenges

Students may not be familiar with this form of assessment.

- Solution: Discuss with students how to prepare, particularly for open book exams. Find a guide prepared by Trent University.

Examples

- Take home exam example

Rubric

- Example of a rubric for a take home exam

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Making the transition to take home exams
- Open book exams toolkit

33. Two-Stage Collaborative Assessment

Description

Two -stage collaborative assessment is a platform that provides the opportunity for students to cooperatively take assessments. It is also known as two-stage exams, tiered exams, pyramid exams, group quizzes, collaborative testing, cooperative exams, and team-based tests. Read more about team-based learning.

How does it work:

- Before the test/exam, encourage students to study with a partner or in a small group.
- During the test administration, students work with their partners or group members and discuss the test questions one-by-one.
- After the group is satisfied with the conversation, each member selects and records their own response.
- Students do not need to provide one answer per group. Each student can have their own answer. Students' answers don't need to be the same.

Benefits

- Research shows that team tests help students learn.
- Feedback. Especially in large classes, re-doing the test immediately with peers allows students to get to immediately discuss the questions and come to the right answer.
- Exam improvement.
- Community building.
- Facilitates inclusion

Examples

- Physics and electrical engineering example
- Two stage midterm exam
- Dr. Catherine Rawn's blog outlines a simple procedure in Psychology
- The positive responses of both teachers and students in an introductory physics course example.

Rubric

Examples of rubrics are: Rubric for assessing students' collaborative skills, exam wrappers for self-assessment, and peer assessment resource document.

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Tips for Successful Two Stage Exams
- Multiple assessment tools could be used in the two-stage collaborative assessment
- Two-stage exams

34. Wikipedia: Build a Wiki/ Fix a Wiki

Description

Wikipedia assignments consists of creating or editing Wikipedia pages and it can be integrated into courses from *any* discipline.

Benefits

- Students develop digital literacies
- Students learn how to research a topic
- Students learn how to operate the backend of websites
- Students detect false information
- Students take ownership of their own work

Challenges

- Editing a Wikipedia page is a learning curve for students
  Solution: Start with smaller tasks throughout the semester to allow the students to practice instead of having them edit a big article at the end only.
- Students come to the instructor for questions
  Solution: Educate and train yourself, Wikipedia has a manual for instructors: How to use Wikipedia as a teaching tool
- Students are not used to Wikipedia style writing
  Solution: Wikipedia provides a manual for students. You could also have students practice by evaluating existing Wikipedia pages.
- It could be a challenge to choose an article to work on
  Solution: Wikipedia provides a manual for how to choose articles to edit.
- Five challenges of Wikipedia assignments, with solutions.

Best Practices

- Ask the students to save a copy of the original document.

Examples

- An example from YorkU's Bazely Biology Lab
- Case Studies: How professors are teaching with Wikipedia

Rubric

- Sample rubric 1
- Sample rubric 2

Resources

Guides & Articles

- Instructor basics
- List of articles that need cleanup

35. 10 Questions 10 Answers

Description

- Students are provided with ten questions and 3 to 7 articles. Students get 3 to 4 weeks to answer the questions. You can read more about this strategy 10 questions, 10 answers.

Rubric

Consider the following resources to create your own rubric

- All about rubrics
- A rubric for rubrics

Resources

Guides & Articles

- 10 questions, 10 answers, by W. Archambault from McGill

FINAL NOTES

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