Assessment of Student Learning

Moving a course online or hybrid requires rethinking your assessment strategies. There are multiple ways to assess student learning and you may wish to consider new options as you transition to a different delivery format. Here are some suggestions and resources to help you effectively assess student learning in your fully or partially online course.

1. **Examine your overall assessment strategy.** It may be time to rethink your assessment strategy given your new delivery format. Start with your course goals and determine which methods are best suited for assessing each of your objectives. Consider how you might shift some of your 'high stakes' assessments to more 'lower stakes' assessments that provide evidence of student learning in more frequent and informal ways. Here are some methods for assessing student learning and how you might adapt them for online courses.

   ○ **Exams.** Traditional timed, proctored exams are challenging in an online environment and tend to disadvantage students. Consider whether you can replace your proctored exam with an open book exam that promotes higher level thinking and avoids technical issues that can arise during timed online tests. An alternative method to the traditional exam is to utilize frequent low-stakes quizzing. There are many benefits to assessing student progress with this method which encourages studying throughout the semester and lessens performance anxiety.

   ○ **Assignments.** What are the essential assignments students need to complete in your course? Can you evaluate one or two major assignments and check student progress more frequently in other ways? For larger more complex assignments, it is critical that guidelines and expectations are clear. Consider redesigning your assessments for more transparency. Research on transparent assignment design has shown that transparency significantly increases underserved college students' success. Consider whether some assignments can be completed by a group. Students can use Zoom, Google Chat, and Google Docs for working together. Once products are submitted in the Assignment Tool, you can distribute the grade and comments to all group members at once by using the Group Submission Setting.

   ○ **Informal Assessments:** Frequent informal assessments are beneficial for checking student progress in relation to your goals. Try new ways of promoting accountability for engaging in course content and using low tech assessments in your online courses. Consider how you might grade online discussions by utilizing a discussion board rubric or having students reflect on the quality of their participation. Asynchronous discussions on Discussion Forum and FlipGrid can be highly beneficial ways to assess student learning. Both of these tools have a ratings/rubric feature and AsULearn recently added a new tool to make grading forums much easier.

2. **Communicate your expectations for an online audience.** Rethinking how you communicate your expectations for an online audience is essential-- especially in asynchronous courses. Students will need frequent reminders and messages from you that provide clarity around assignment guidelines. Consider uploading a two-minute Zoom recording that talks the students through the assignment and presents the criteria. Perhaps you can share an example of student work and discuss why the assignment received high marks. You can also open a Discussion Forum for an assignment Q & A. Once you have answered a question in the forum, you can easily refer students to your previously posted answers. Last, consider utilizing the Announce page for timely reminders about due dates and tips on how to be successful.

3. **Provide frequent, timely and specific feedback.** Research shows that quality feedback, delivered at the appropriate time, is one of the top influences on student achievement. Since discussion boards are utilized frequently in asynchronous courses, consider how you can deliver strategic feedback for online discussions. This Chronicle Advice Guide describes the qualities of good feedback and offers methods and tools that can be used to provide crucial feedback for learning to include video and audio options. Don't forget Turnitin provides options for providing feedback in a variety of ways and activities such as Digital Gallery Walks and peer reviews are effective strategies that enable students to give feedback to each other.

4. **Utilize AsULearn tools for efficiency**. AsULearn tools can aid in efficiency which can become even more important in online classrooms. For assignments, the Rubric and Grading Guide offer efficient methods for grading student products against specific criteria. In both tools, you can utilize a frequent comment bank to provide feedback to students quickly. You can grade papers directly in a PDF without downloading to save time. Consider whether some of your assignments can be completed by a group. Students can use Zoom, Google Chat, and Google Docs for working together. Once products are submitted in the Assignment Tool, you can distribute the grade and comments to all group members at once by using the Group Submission Setting. For informal assessments, both the Discussion Forum and Flipgrid have ratings/rubric features that allow you to assess individual posts. For more tips and suggestions, add yourself to the **AsULearn for Faculty Group** so you watch videos and read news and tips about Quiz Tool, Turnitin, Rubric and Marking Guide, etc. To join this group, simply click this link and then click the "Join Group' icon.