A Guide to Alternative Assessments

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Introduction

This guide is designed to help instructors design and implement alternative assessments. The guide begins with sections dedicated to Best Practices and Accessibility Considerations, followed by 33 identified alternative assessment options. Each alternative assessment page contains a description, benefits, challenges and solutions, examples, rubrics, and resources. The resources sections contain links to articles and guides and, when available, links to technology tools to facilitate implementation of the assessment.

Please note that this document is a work in progress.

Acknowledgement

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Best Practices

Consider the following best practices when you are designing alternative assessments.

Choice of Topics

- Consider choosing interdisciplinary topics.
- When possible, allow students to choose a topic of interest or a topic they are passionate about.

Documentation

- Provide "how-to" documentation.
- 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 assignments such as reflective pieces or concept maps.
- When assessing reflective submissions, evaluate only the content.
- For longer assessments, decide whether you want to see all 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? What happens with late submissions?
- Set guidelines for the length of responses.

Group and Individual Work

- Determine whether you will allow group presentations or individual presentations.
- Develop a protocol for collaboration.
- Consider devoting time for team building and provide guidelines for appropriate interactions.
- Create a safe space and a trusting relationship with students.
- Share personal experiences and examples when possible to build a trusting relationship with students.
- 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.
- Ask students whether you can use their projects in future courses.

Accessibility and Inclusion Considerations

Consider the following questions when you are designing alternative assessments:

- 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 you mitigate anxiety or other stresses for students?

How will you address the following concerns when doing face-to-face assessments?

- 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 because they don't translate well with screen readers.
- Use headings because screen readers scan based on headings and styles instead of visual formatting.
- Provide an informative text with hyperlinks because links are read out loud by screen readers.
- Do not use colour alone to convey meaning.
- Provide the option to publish on the public-facing course website under a pseudonym.

Check out The Hitch-Hikers Guide to Alternative Assessment prepared by Damian Gordon for more information about accessibility considerations in some 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 students to include assignments to go with the readings, suggestions for further reading, and so on.

Benefits

This assessment allows the learner to

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

It also 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; and,
- assess what learners understand about the content and how they determine what is important.

Examples

Example about a mini digital anthology HERE.

Rubrics

See this poetry portfolio rubric by K.S. Davis.

Resources

Guides and Articles

See this article on Alternatives to Traditional Testing from the Berkeley Center for Teaching & Learning.

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 submission 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

Working on a portfolio

- allows continuous engagement with the course material,
- gives students an opportunity to get early feedback and practice, and
- encourages revision and improvement skills.

Examples

- See Katie Heerspink's Master's Coursework Annotated Transcript as an example of an annotated portfolio.
- Lancaster University provides a sample management student's annotated portfolio.

Rubrics

The University of Wisconsin-Stout shares an EPortfolio (Digital Portfolio) Rubric.

Resources

Guides and Articles

Northeast Wisconsin's Technical College uses *Classroom Assessment Techniques* by T. Angelo and P. Cross as the basis for its guide to Annotated Portfolios.

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, compare the multiple sources, compare the authors' points of view, check the biases, and provide an explanatory introduction to the bibliography.

Benefits

Creating an annotated bibliography allows students to engage with the relevant literature and limits plagiarism.

Challenges

- Not all students are aware of which sources to choose.
  Solution: Set clear parameters.
  o What is the number of items you want students to find?
  o What kind of sources are acceptable? (Peer reviewed only? Popular culture? Websites? Newspapers and magazines? Primary sources?)
  o What is the location of acceptable sources? (Will you refuse items which aren't in your institution's library or which have been published in a certain country?)
- There is a need to consult with your subject librarian.

Examples

Santa Rosa Junior College uses an annotated bibliography assignment in its ENGL1A course.

Rubrics

- The Rubric Assessment of Information Literacy Skills organization provides this annotated bibliography rubric.
- See the University of Kansas's Assessment Rubric for Annotated Bibliography.

Resources

Guides and Articles

The Warwick Academic Development Centre describes using an 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

Blogs and vlogs are

- personal, allowing for students' voices to be expressed,
- part of the "confessional culture,"
- allow students to practice new literacies,
- hard to plagiarize,
- dynamic in nature and easily augmented,
- easy to share,
- opportunities to practice effective communication and explaining, and
- empowering for learners to share their voices.

Challenges

- Marking could be time consuming.
- Some students might be shy or uneasy with creating vlogs.
- They require some technical expertise.

Examples

- King's College London has an [article "Vlogging in Student-led Seminars" related to international development](#).
- See this [article on "Pedagogy and the Class Blog" by @samplereality](#).
- Mark C. Marino provides [a blog rubric for his writing program](#).
- UCL, London shares [a blog about internship assessment via vlog](#) that contains sample work from students.
- Other examples could include a museum tour for an arts class, a vlog through an experiment for science class, an oral analysis of poetry for literature classes, or a vlog in the target language for a language class.

Rubrics

- See this [vlog rubric from the University of Central Florida](#).

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Watch the video of Indiana University professor Justin Hodgson introducing vlogging for his "Professional Writing Skills" course assignment.
- More about social pedagogies HERE.

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 to 500 words. You could ask students to write a policy brief or analyze an already written policy brief.

Benefits

Dr. Gigi Luk outlines the benefits and challenges of using briefs.

Examples

- Read this King's College London post about employability-related assessment: "Written and Verbal Group Policy Briefs".
- Students prepared this policy brief example shared by Melissa K. Lewis, a policy brief by Kavya Velagapudi and April Rand, and a second policy brief example shared by Melissa K. Lewis.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill shares this handout for students.
- The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina also shares an example of "A Not-So-Good Policy Brief".
- See this guide to writing policy briefs and reports by Mitchell McIvor at the University of Toronto.

6. Case Studies

Description

Case studies consist of fictional scenarios requiring students to solve dilemmas.

There are many types of case studies: a) detailed, extensive case studies; b) descriptive or narrative cases; c) mini cases; d) bullet cases; e) directed choice cases; and f) multiple choice cases.

Benefits

Case studies

- 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, and
- can be done individually or by teams.

Examples

- Carleton University provides many examples, including biosphere case studies and diversity case studies.
- The Bioquest Curriculum Consortium lists many case studies in astronomy, biochemistry, bioinformatics, chemistry, ethics, evolution, genetics, behavior, biology, botany, ecology, epidemiology, health sciences, microbiology, phylogenetics, physiology, physics, and other disciplines.
- The National Center for Case Study in Sciences at Buffalo University provides a case collection.
- The University of British Columbia has many open case studies available.
- Forestry: In this assignment, students in a graduate course wrote their own case studies. This University of British Columbia wiki for an assignment on forestry 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. See this University of British Columbia wiki on action plans for climate change.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- "Assembling a Case Study Tool Kit: 10 Tools for Teaching With Cases" by Annie Prud'homme-Généreux.

- The University of New South Wales posted a guide to assessment by case studies and scenarios.
- 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

Digital storytelling allows every student to tell their own story and connect it to the course content.

Examples

Alwiya Omar wrote about "The Power of Storytelling to Engage Students."

Rubrics

- The University of Houston provides a grading rubric for student digital storytelling.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Gail Matthews-DeNatale at Simmons College in Boston wrote "Digital Storytelling: Tips and Resources."
- Carolyn Wilson at Athabasca University wrote a blog titled "What is Digital Storytelling and How to Get Started."
- The University of Houston posted "What is Digital Storytelling?"
- WeVideo Academy has YouTube video on how to get started with a digital story.

Technology Tools

- Create digital books: http://bookcreator.com/.
- art based stories: https://storybird.com/
- comic strips: https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/

8.   Concept Maps

Description

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

Benefits

- Concept maps encourage learners to think visually and verbally about how concepts are related.
- Some instructors report they can be assessed for grading quickly.
- They can include a 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 a [screencast with Dr. Mark Morton (University of Waterloo) on how instructors can use concept mapping tools](#) to support student learning in different disciplines.
- Read this [blog post by Chris Ray on "Notes vs. Maps."](#).

Rubrics

Waterloo University provides this [rubric for assessing concept maps](#).

Resources

Guides and Articles

- LucidChart provides a [comprehensive guide to concept maps](#).
- Health Sciences and Gerontology professor [Josephine McMurry explains how she uses concept maps in this video](#).

Technology Tools

- https://www.mindmeister.com/
- https://cmap.ihmc.us/

- https://vue.tufts.edu/
- https://app.diagrams.net/

9. Digital Artefacts

Description

Students are asked to create a digital artefact as a standalone assessment or to complement their essays. Digital artefacts 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

Developing digital artefacts

- provides a high level of authenticity,
- helps prepare students for the job market, and
- allows students to showcase their creativity.

Examples

Law: In an interview with Jayne Pearson, [Dr. Leslie-Anne Duvic-Paoli describes asking students to explain legal concepts through digital artefacts](#); the submissions included videos, poems, posters, twitter threads, and legal briefs.

Rubrics

The University of Wisconsin-Stout provides a [rubric for video projects](#).

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Jen Rossity wrote ["Assessment in a Digital Age: Rethinking Multimodal Artefacts in Higher Education."](#)
- Nielsen et al. wrote ["Digital Explanation as Assessment in University Science."](#)

10. Error Analysis/Find the Error

Description

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

Benefits

This assessment 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.

Resources

Guides and Articles

Western University provides online and alternative assessment ideas.

11. Fact Sheet

Description

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

Benefits

Writing a fact sheet allows students to

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

Examples

- Ask students to create a fact sheet about COVID-19.
- See these fact sheet guidelines for a geography assignment.
- A fact sheet could be implemented in multiple disciplines:
    - health issues (smoking, HIV, etc.),
    - economics or sociology (school board budgets or trends in enrollment)
    - history or political science (fact sheet on a certain war, election, unrest)
    - engineering (fact sheet a new structure, procedure, discovery)

Rubrics

- North Toronto Collegiate Institute shares an assessment rubric for a general fact sheet.
- Carleton University has a rubric for an agricultural fact sheet.

Resources

Guides and Articles

Kent State University has a guide to fact sheets.

12. Fake News Assignment

Description

Fake news is at the heart of the assignment. Assessment of students 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

- This assessment allows students to practice being media literate.
- Students can choose their topic of interest.
- It keeps students up to date.

Examples

- The New York Times suggests this approach to a fake news assignment for English language learners.
- Read this New York Times lesson plan titled "'Chocolate Found to Stave Off Death!' Analyzing the Scientific Evidence Behind Health Headlines."

Resources

Guides and Articles

- The University of Wyoming shares lessons plans related to media misinformation, viral deception, and fake news.
- HCC Libraries provides a guide to 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

- Dr. L. Kip Wheeler shares tips on conducting an interview.

Resources

Guides and Articles

Best Practices in expert interviews HERE

14. Flexible Assessment

Description

Flexible assessment is competency-based, meaning 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 in a section of the book "Forward with FLEXibility" by Alise de Bie and Kate Brown.

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

- Kira Smith wrote about implementation of flexible assessment in a large classroom at McGill.
- Nicky Didicher of Simon Fraser University wrote "Bento and Buffet: Two Approaches to Flexible Summative Assessment."

Resources

Guides and Articles

- See Teesside University's best practices for flexible assessment.
- Ryerson University provides this flexible learning guide.
- Ido Roll wrote an article on rethinking assessment in the flexible era.
- Edward Flagg's slides on flexible assessment contain more information.
- Read Brian Irwin and Stuart Hepplestone's article "Examining increased flexibility in assessment formats."

15. Historical Trial

Description

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

Benefits

Conducting mock trials

- allows students to practice inquiry and exploration,
- allows students to develop research skills, and
- provides opportunities for students to cultivate critical evaluation, analytical, and assessment skills.

Examples

In the Zinn Education Project, Bill Bigelow shares a learning activity called "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

- Jordan Zakarin wrote about cases of plagiarism for song lyrics, music, paintings, other art work such as the Bob Dylan case.
- Shannon Doyne and Holly Epstein Ojalvo write about analyzing trials in contemporary television shows or movies. For example, students could watch "A Few Good Men" or "Philadelphia."

Rubrics

Markville Secondary School shares an example of rubric for historical trials.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- The Historical Thinking Project writes about mock trials in the history classroom.
- The Citizenship Foundation provides a guide for running a mock trial.
- The New York Times has a handout for students on preparing for a mock trial.
- The New York Times shares an article on conducting a mock trial.

16. Infographic

Description

An infographic is a visual representation of information. You could provide the topics or ask students to generate the topics.

Benefits

Developing infographics

- allows students to practice inquiry and exploration,
- allows students to develop research skills, and
- 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

See the fake news assignment from Elena Obukhova at the McGill Faculty of Management and infographic examples from Penn State University Department of Earth and Mineral Engineering.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Read this thesis by Glen Bruce Gover, Eastern Kentucky University, titled "Teacher Thoughts on Infographics as Alternative Assessment: A Post-Secondary Educational Exploration."
- Penn State University infographic assignment HERE.

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

This assignment allows students to write concisely and gives them 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

Terry Hébert from McGill University shares a lay translation assignment in pharmacology.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Terry Hébert from McGill University provides slides on what makes a good lay summary.
- Monica Duke, in collaboration with the Patients Participate! project, shares a guide on how to write a lay summary.
- Sara E. Brownell, Jordan V. Price, and Lawrence Steinman published an opinion piece on science communication to the general public.
- The Canadian Frailty Network provides guidelines for lay summaries.

Technology Tools

Try these readability tests:

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

18. Letter to the Editor/Memorandum

Description

A 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 can be based on facts or emotions.

A memo is a short written piece used to convey information to a colleague.

Benefits

Writing a letter or memo

- introduces students to public rhetoric,
- allow students to develop digital citizenship,
- provides a good synthesising exercise,
- provides opportunities for authentic assessment, and
- 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' opinions might lack inclusion.
  Solution: Ask the students write a list of who this letter might impact and in what way.

Examples

- Download this sample political science assignment on writing a letter to the editor from York University.
- See this letter to the editor assignment from the nursing school at Florida Atlantic University.
- North Carolina State University shares a sample memo assignment.

Rubrics

Purdue University provides their grading rubric for a letter to the editor.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Lisa Fink writes about using letters to the editor as part of teaching controversies.

- NJ 11th for Change shares [tips on writing letters to the editor for students](#).
- The University of Kansas Community Toolbox includes a [section on writing letters to the editor](#).

<h2 style="text-align:center">19. News Article Critique/Research Article Critique</h2>

Description

This assessment involves breaking down and evaluating the pieces of an article.

Benefits

Writing critiques

- allows students to practice a 21st century skill,
- allows students develop critical analysis, and
- provides students opportunities to develop their communication skills.

Challenges

Examples

- J. Laurie Snell from Dartmouth College writes about critiquing news articles.
- Dr. Ali Rezaei shares an example of a research article critique.

Rubrics

- See this rubric on evaluation of critiques of scientific articles from Cornell College.
- On iRubric, see this rubric on evaluation of critiques of scientific articles.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Nerdify has a "Complete Guide on Article Analysis (with 1 Analysis Example)."
- J. Piliavin shares an article analysis assignment.
- Dave Mogk from Montana State University shares a description of a critical review of a journal article.

<center>**20. Op-Ed Piece to be Sent to Local Newspaper**</center>

Description

"Op-ed", short for Opposite the Editorial, is a newspaper opinion piece from contributors not affiliated with the editorial board. Authoring an 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

Op-ed writing

- allows students to practice a 21st century skill,
- allows students to develop understanding of both sides of an issue, and
- provides students opportunities to develop understanding of the audience of a given topic.

Examples

See an [infrastructural design example from Cornell University](#).

Rubrics

San Jose State University provides this [rubric on assessing op-ed pieces](#).

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Kent State University shares this [handout on op-ed assignments](#).
- See [The Op-ed Project](#) for more ideas.

21. Open Pedagogy: Open Online Resources

Description

Through open pedagogy, students are asked to create content to share or release as open educational resources. Open pedagogy assignments differ in the degree of openness and can 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. You can read more about it the different roles of students in these examples of open pedagogy by Austin Community College.

Benefits

- Open pedagogy allows better collaboration between students themselves and between the instructor and students.
- It enables students to publish their work.
- Students feel supported and empowered.
- It provides an opportunity for authentic mentorship.
- Students have 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

- Find an example from the University of British Columbia about students creating case studies.
- In the Open Pedagogy Notebook, read the information guide written by health sciences students.
- Read about creating a renewable website with students as content creators.
- Open Pedgagogy Notebook has more examples of students creating content.

Rubrics

Depending on the project, you need to design a rubric that looks at content, collaboration, and design.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Elizabeth Mays edited "A Guide to Making Open Textbooks with Students."
- Read more on this website for the State University of New York's course on open pedagogy.
- E. Beatty wrote about how faculty can benefit from open educational resource assignments.
- Jessica O'Reilly at Cambrian College wrote about renewable assignments.
- Read Abbey K. Elder's 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 or without preparation, open or closed book
- student presentation
- oral assessment based on previously prepared work
- oral presentation based on a paper/synopsis
- oral presentation based on a project report
- oral presentation based on a portfolio

Read more about the different forms of oral assessments described by Aarhus University.

Benefits

Oral examination

- provides an opportunity for interaction,
- allows more connection between the students and the instructor,
- give the students an opportunity to clarify ambiguous questions, and
- is an opportunity for clarification of ambiguous questions in the moment.

Challenges

- It may cause undue anxiety for some students; some students need to be accommodated with alternative assessments.
- Students with hearing or speech difficulties may require adjustments.
- There is a lack of anonymity for the examiner.
- There could be bias toward students' dress, gender, ethnicity or educational backgrounds.
- Some students might not be familiar with this kind of assessment.
- There might be concerns with keeping a record of the examination.

Examples

- Edward Scheer discusses assessing oral presentations through Pecha Kucha, the Japanese term for the sound of chit-chat.
- Kang et al. write about Providing an Oral Examination as an Authentic Assessment in a Large Section, Undergraduate Diversity Class.
- Melis Hunt writes about using oral exams as an assessment method in engineering courses.

Rubrics

Gillian Saunders-Smits wrote a [how-to guide on remote oral exams](#).

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Consider the six dimensions of oral assessment in a [short guide to oral assessment by Gordon Joughin](#).
- Consider the six steps to prepare an oral examination in the [University of Guelph's guidelines for oral assessments and exams](#).
- G. Joughin wrote 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 two to three relevant podcasts and justify why they are useful, c) search for two to three relevant podcasts and critically review them, and d) search for two to three relevant podcasts and create five to seven questions to aid reflection on them.

Benefits

- A podcast allows for authentic assessment.
- Students practice public speaking.
- Students practice digital literacy.

Examples

- Jayne Pearson wrote about Dr. Eva Philippaki at King's University London podcasting the findings of a physics experiment.
- Chris Buddle wrote about podcasts as an assessment tool in ecology class at McGill University.

Rubrics

- The University of Wisconsin-Stout provides this rubric for podcast assessment.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- York University's Dr. Stephanie Bell shares a presentation on how to design a podcast assignment.
- Dr. Stephanie Bell shares a presentation on teaching with learner-centred podcasts.
- See these success criteria for a podcast.
- Jake Ludington shares tips on recording a podcast.

Technology Tools

- Garageband software and tutorial HERE.
- Audacity software and tutorial HERE.
- Mixpad

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. Presentations could be face-to-face, through a face-to-face or virtual poster walk. Posters could also be individual or group projects.

Benefits

Poster sessions and providing peer critique

- encourages creativity,
- help develop communication skills,
- involve students in the assessment,
- encourage students to investigate deeper,
- encourage peer-learning, and
- give 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.
- Students might spend more time on the visual effects and not the actual content.
  Solution: Provide milestones for the students to follow; you could also scaffold the tasks.
- Assessor might be affected by the visual effects.
  Solution: Create a detailed rubric.

Examples

- Jessica L. Menke writes about Implementation of Online Poster Sessions in Online and Face-to-Face Classrooms as a Unique Assessment Tool.
- Pernille Risør Elving shares an example of poster session assessment from the arts.

Rubrics

- North Carolina State University shares their rubric for assessing poster presentations a rating scale for assessing posters, and George Hess's 60-Second Poster Evaluation.

Guides and Articles

- Geraldine O'Neill and David Jennings of University College Dublin share their guide for staff on the use of posters for assessment.

- Brian Whalley writes about the process of using electronic posters in two undergraduate classes.
- Ross et al. write about using posters for assessment in large classrooms.
- M. Vollaro shares an example from mechanical engineering of a poster session as an experiential learning activity.
- Dr. Colin Howard writes about posters as summative assessment.

Technology Tools

You can create a Gallery walk using Media collection in eClass (formerly Moodle). Carleton University shares more about Gallery Walk.

25. Public Service Announcement

Description

A public service announcement (PSA) is a message (written, auditory, or visual) designed to educate the public. Stations broadcast PSAs for free to fulfill their obligation to serve the public. A PSA usually serves to raise awareness about a social issue.

Examples of PSAs are: YouTube example of a PSA from the US government about pollution, a "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk" PSA, and you can find the 10 most famous PSAs according to the Washington Post.

Benefits

Developing PSAs

- 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, and written communication skills, and
- is 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 university departments that make such resources available to students.

Examples

- Benjamin Moss writes about using PSAs in teaching.
- 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 studies, example 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

- o   Health—on washing hands and the spread of disease
- o   Political—on elections or gun control

Rubrics

Solution Tree Press provides an [example of a rubric for assessing PSAs](#).

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Mendi Benigni writes about [adding a public service announcement to the curriculum](#).
- The Pollack Academic Center of Excellence provides a [checklist for students writing PSAs](#).

26. Professional Presentation

Description

This kind of presentation is similar to the type of professional presentation that a consultant gives to a community group.

You could ask the students to prepare a presentation or look for two or three presentations to analyze.

Benefits

Working on professional presentations

- 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, and written communication skills,
- is 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 university 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

Lori Breslow of the Sloan Communication Program shares an example of a rubric for professional presentations.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Angie Stevens gives strategies and tools to support students preparing a presentation.
- York University provides a guide for student video presentations.

Technology Tools

Students could use any presentation software: PowerPoint narration tutorial from Microsoft, record a presentation through zoom tutorial: cellphilm tutorial from the University of Toronto.

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

These reflective assignments

- encourage students to participate,
- provide evidence of which concepts were understood and which ones need explaining, and
- allow students to develop their critical skills.

Challenges

- There is a need to establish trust relationships with the students.
  Solution: Share personal experience and 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) providing evidence of their progression through a learning journey, b) identifying their assumptions, c) providing a critical evaluation of their learning, d) identify critical moments in their learning, and e) identifying 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

King's College London shares information about reflective coursework in psychology.

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

Simulations and role-play

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

Examples

See the video series: "Using Role-Plays in Formative Assessment" by Ben Barry and Gail Trapp.

Rubrics

- See this rubric for role-plays by C. Chan at the University of Hong Kong.
- This is a student/teacher resource with a role-play rubric.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- The University of New South Wales provides information about assessing role-play and simulations.
- See this guide about role-plays by C. Chan at the University of Hong Kong.
- Boston College describes simulations and role-play.
- Carleton University shares tips on 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

Story mapping introduces the students to digital humanities, and 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

- See "Mapping Air Raids: The Impact of WWII on Japan's Cities.
- Lynn Walsh shares "The Almighty Smallpox" map.
- Here are maps showing housing information.

Rubrics

Rubrics from University of Minnesota : Basic story map rubric, detailed story map rubric, and a final group story map project rubric.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- The University of Minnesota provides story map instructor resources.
- See these google docs with a story map instructor's guide and a semester-long story map instructor's guide.

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 two or three relevant interview transcripts and justify why they are useful, c) create a video of a simulated interview, or 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 can pick a topic or allow the students to pick a topic and have a conversation about it.

Benefits

Interviewing provides in-depth information about the students' 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

- Read about the experiences of political science professor Veronica Kitchen at Waterloo University when she asked her students to write assessment exams.
- Biochemistry professors included student-generated reading questions in their course.
- Pittenger et al. used student-generated questions to assess learning in a pharmacy course.

Rubrics

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

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Mike U. Smith and Sherry A. Southerland at the Mercer University School of Medicine write about using interviews in assessments.
- Barbara Morgan Gardner and Kenneth L. Alford write about interviews to assess and mentor students.
- The Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning shares this five-minute interview assessment.

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

Student-designed projects

- demonstrate students' understanding of the material,
- elicit student thinking,
- are more sensitive to students' individual learning needs, and
- can be used to generate feedback for students to improve their thinking.

Challenges

- There may be plagiarism in questions.
  Solution: Ask students to provide questions related to real life situations, or 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/that might be of interest to them; or 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 Waterloo University Veronica Kitchen asked her students to write assessment exams, read about her experience.
- Biochemistry professors Erika G. Offerdahl and Lisa Montplaisir included student-generated reading questions in their course. Read about their experience.
- Pittenger et al. used student-generated questions to assess learning in a pharmacy course.

Rubrics

- Download Phil Wormuth's rubric on formative assessments.

- iRubric has this [rubric for student-generated questions](#).

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Use of Student-Generated Questions in the Classroom
- Emmett Dziuk, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, writes about using [student-generated questions in the classroom](#).
- Youki Terada writes about [using student-generated questions to promote deeper thinking](#).
- Jasmine Parent shares this ["Strategy Bite" about student-generated questions at McGill University](#).

32. Take-Home/Open-Book Exam

Description

In take-home or open-book examinations the students are allowed to have access to books, papers, and online content. Different designs include a) asking students to undertake a take-home exam that the instructor designs, or b) asking the students to design an open book exam.

Benefits

Take-home and open-book exams

- allow for assessment of higher order learning (e.g., application, analysis, evaluation, and creation),
- develop information literacy skills,
- mimic real-world professional activities where students would have access to information, and
- are 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. You can find a guide to online exams prepared by University of Western Ontario and a guide to open-book exams prepared by Trent University.

Examples

The University of New Mexico shares this example of a take-home exam.

Rubrics

See this rubric for a take home exam from the University of Texas at El Paso. HERE

Resources

Guides and Articles

- The Public Service Commission of Canada has best practices for unsupervised testing.
- Western University shares online and alternative assessment ideas.

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 a two-stage exam, tiered exam, pyramid exam, group quiz, collaborative testing, cooperative exam, and team-based test (Northeastern University provides a description of collaborative assessment).

How does it work:

- Before the test/exam, students are encouraged 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 do not 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.
- Other benefits include improvement on exams and community building.
- Linda Ismailos and Tiffany L. Gallager write that collaborative assessment facilitates inclusion for students at-risk.

Examples

- King's College London shares this physics and electrical engineering example.
- UBC Science shares a video on science education.
- Dr. Catherine Rawn's blog outlines a simple procedure in psychology..
- Georg W. Rieger and Cynthia E. Heiner write about the positive responses of both teachers and students in an introductory physics course.
- King's College London shares information about two-stage exams in natural and mathematical sciences.

Rubrics

- Examples of rubrics are: rubric for assessing students' collaborative skills, checklist for self-assessment, checklist for peer assessment, and a rubric for assessing team work.
- A rubric for teamwork from Rochester Institute of Technology.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- Read these tips for successful two stage exams.
- See how multiple assessment tools could be used in the two-stage collaborative assessment.
- The University of British Columbia provides examples of two-stage exams, in Catherine D. Rawn's blog, and in their department of earth ocean and atmospheric sciences.

34. Wikipedia: Build a Wiki/Fix a Wiki

Description

Wikipedia assignments consists of creating or editing Wikipedia pages and 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 only at the end.
- Students come to the instructor for questions.
  Solution: Educate and train yourself: Wikipedia Education Foundation provides this guide with instructor basics.
- Students are not used to the Wikipedia style of 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 Commons provides a manual for how to choose articles to edit.

Read more about the challenges (and solutions) of Wikipedia use in this article by Eryk Salvaggio.

Best Practices

- Ask the students to save a copy of the original document.
- Dawn Bazely, with a biology lab at York University, shares her assignment for students to edit Wikipedia pages.
- The Wikipedia Education Foundation provides many case studies on Wikipedia in education.
- Saul Hoffman writes about Wikipedia in teaching for his masters thesis.

Rubrics

Here is a rubric for a Wikipedia assignment and a rubric for a "Wikipedia vs Encyclopedia"

assignment.

Resources

Guides and Articles

- The Wikipedia Education Foundation provides this guide with instructor basics.
- This guide from Lone Star College-University Park includes wiki assignments.
- Here is the list of Wikipedia articles that need cleanup.

35. 10 Questions, 10 Answers

Description

Students are provided with ten questions and three to seven articles. Students get three to four weeks to answer the questions. You can read more about this strategy in 10 Questions, 10 Answers by William Archambault.

Resources

Guides and Articles

10 Questions, 10 Answers by William Archambault is a guide from McGill University.

Final Notes

This is version 2.0 of this live document. More versions will be published once ready. Please let us know if you have any missing or non-functioning links. We also appreciate your feedback, suggestions, or if you would like your work to be featured in the document. You can contact Eliana Elkhoury at eelkhoury@athabascau.ca