A Virtual Institute for Alternative Assessment in Higher Education

Wednesday, Nov. 23, 2022
1:00pm-7:00pm EST

The Virtual Institute begins at:

1:00pm EST

8:00pm EET

8:00pm SAST

6:00pm GMT

4:40pm Thursday (ACDT)

10:00am PST

12:00pm CST

11:00am MST

11:30pm IST

12:00am Thursday ALMT

9:00pm EAT

Institute Agenda

1:00 pm	***Welcome to the Institute*** **Conference organizer: Dr. Eliana Elkhoury, Athabasca University**
1:10 pm	***KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Maha Bali*** ***Alternative Assessments for Inclusive Teaching***
	How do we approach assessment in alternative ways that help us achieve goals less tangible than traditional "learning outcomes"? How can we think of assessments as a way of creating more inclusive learning environments, promoting care, and nurturing community? We will discuss *why,* give examples of *how,* and encourage participants to imagine *what's next* for their own context. *Maha Bali is Professor of Practice at the Center for Learning and Teaching at the American University in Cairo. She has a PhD in Education from the University of Sheffield, UK. She is co-founder of virtuallyconnecting.org (a grassroots movement that challenges academic gatekeeping at conferences) and co-facilitator of Equity Unbound (an equity-focused, open, connected intercultural learning curriculum, which has also branched into academic community activities* Continuity with Care*, Socially Just Academia, a collaboration with OneHE:* Community-building Resources *and MYFest, an innovative 3-month professional learning journey. She writes and speaks frequently about social justice, critical pedagogy, and open and online education. She blogs regularly at http://blog.mahabali.me and tweets @bali_maha*
2:00 pm	***Choose one of these three Concurrent Sessions***

Session 1	**_Investigating Online vs. In-person Learning on Student Performance_** **Upasana Singh, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**
	The urgent transformation from face-to-face to an online format in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) worldwide, was carried out overnight, almost seamlessly. While the transition to adopting online assessment methods proved challenging for many academics, as recent literature in this area highlights, many face-to-face universities had never implemented any form of online assessment from an institutional perspective prior to the pandemic. This issue was further exacerbated by the fact that these assessments had to be conducted remotely, bringing to the fore extraordinary challenges for HEIs including academic dishonesty, infrastructure limitations, coverage of learning outcomes, and commitment of students to submit assessments, to name just a few. This presentation will identify research which determined which teaching method proved more effective over an 8-year period. The scores of 548 students, 401 traditional students and 147 online students, in an environmental science class were used to determine which instructional modality generated better student performance. The purpose of this research was to determine whether students performed better or worse in the online environment. Results from institutional-wide modules were compared across the two years. Using a t-test, the initial results indicate statistically significant differences between the 2019 and 2020 results in most modules across different colleges, where a significant increase in the average marks obtained by students (most modules tend to have high pass rates but not high averages/mean scores) was noted.
Session 2	**_Alternative Assessments to Enhance Students' Digital Literacies_** **Nadine Aboulmagd & Samah Adel, The American University in Cairo, Egypt**
	This presentation will showcase the Digital Literacies Toolkit which has been developed at the Center for Learning and Teaching at the American University in Cairo has developed which includes alternative forms of digital assessments and activities. The goal of the tool is to enhance students' digital literacies and provide alternative forms of assessment activities. Assessments in the toolkit can be filtered by intended skill to be taught and the category of digital literacy (i.e., digital interaction, critical thinking, etc.). All toolkit resources +are alternative assessments and are meant to offer inspiration as well as possible adaptations. The toolkit resources are available to educators worldwide to remix and reuse creating their own versions. The presentation will focus on four alternative assessments namely using FlipGrip for engagement in online courses, Using Interactive Timelines, Happiness Habit Log and Academic Integrity through Case Studies.
Session 3	**_Alternative Assessment: The Experience of a Visually Impaired Student_** **Yasser Tamer, The American University in Cairo, Egypt** Listen to a visually impaired student explain the experience and value of alternative assessment used to accommodate a special learning need.
2:30 pm	**_Choose one of these two Concurrent Sessions_**
Session 1	**_The Road to Authenticity: Supporting Educators to Reimagine Assessment for a Changing Postsecondary Landscape_** **Linda Facchini, Seneca College**
	The recent pandemic coupled with increasingly globalized classrooms have accelerated mainstream adoption of online and hybrid learning modalities that allow students to choose between in-person and remote instruction. In addition, competency-based micro-credentials have emerged as solutions to increased demands for reskilling and upskilling within the labour force. Now more than ever, higher education is being asked to reflect on the ability of traditional assessment methods, such as exams and written essays, to measure student achievement of career-relevant learning outcomes equitably and effectively. In this presentation, Seneca College's efforts to support faculty in rethinking

	assessment strategies in the context of this changing educational landscape are explained including institutional factors driving this need for change in assessment practices, limitations of traditional assessment methods in the current higher education ecosystem, and benefits of authentic and alternative assessments. Some implementation challenges and barriers to faculty adoption of these non-traditional assessment methods, how "Rethinking Assessment Strategies for Online Learning: a short-course for post-secondary educators" (https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/rethinkingassessment/) is being used, and efforts to build a collection of authentic and alternative assessment exemplars will all be highlighted. We will conclude the presentation by looking ahead to future planned initiatives.
Session 2	**Incorporating alternative assessment methods in the credit-bearing information literacy online course to measure the transfer of learning** **Marta Samokishyn, Victoria Tsonos, Saint Paul University, Ottawa ON**
	As partners in the educational process, instructional librarians are often faced with the issue of meaningful assessment of learning. This is especially relevant for those librarians offering credit-bearing information literacy courses. To address this issue, librarians at Saint Paul University have implemented alternative assessment methods in their semester-long mandatory first-year undergraduate online course. Applying critical information literacy approaches to designing this course, the instructors focused on problem-posing information literacy education to cultivate the sense of agency in their students through an ongoing dialogue and through problem-based learning, amplifying learners' self-directing capacities. One of the approaches that have served this purpose is an alternative assessment method in the form of an evidence journal, adopted from the Human Restoration Project and uniquely adapted to an information literacy context. This presentation will discuss in detail the design and implementation of the evidence journal throughout the 1st-year mandatory Information Literacy course. The authors will conclude with a set of recommendations to instructional librarians about implementing similar assessment methods in their own institutions and best practices in applying critical information literacy perspectives in this process.
3:00 pm	**Choose one of these two Concurrent Sessions**
Session 1	**Assessment: The Game** **Professor Ian Turner, University of Derby, United Kingdom**
	Assessment the Game is a playful tool for allowing people to think and talk about assessments. The game is designed to break down existing barriers and preconceptions about assessment modes that can be used in higher education. The talk will outline the game, its components and how it can be used. The game is hosted here https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/assessment-game
Session 2	**Practical News Storytelling: An Alternative Assessment** **Catriona Forrest, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom**
	Assessments for core courses in the Sociology-based Master's in Media, communication, and International Journalism involve students in working in groups to create a short video news story which is then assessed along with a reflective report of their experience. Students can carry these skills on an individually produced video news report and reflective report, as an optional alternative to the traditional Sociology dissertation. This presentation outlines the design of the formative and summative assessments, its challenges and benefits, and discusses the ongoing development of this assessment to adapt to changes in student numbers, student feedback, and other factors including COVID.
3:30 pm	**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: David Buck** **"Ungrading: A Road to Equity"**

According to Peter Elbow, "Grading tends to undermine the climate for teaching and learning. Once we start grading their work, students are tempted to study or work for the grade rather than for learning." Imagine rewriting the narrative of assessment to include student agency, where we tap into students' intrinsic motivation to labor with a focus on the learning process rather than a graded product. Imagine creating courses as natural critical learning environments where students are encouraged to pursue meaningful questions, set, and pursue personal learning goals/targets, take an active role in their assessment, and choose the evidence that best demonstrates their learning. Imagine courses in which narrative feedback and student reflections replace the transactional, inequitable nature of traditional grades. An interesting proposition, no? Join us as we explore the equity and freedom promised by ungrading!

David Buck is a Professor of English at Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland. Before joining Howard CC's faculty in 2007, he was an English Instructor for eight years at Rowan College at Burlington County in New Jersey. From 2010-2014, he served as Director of eLearning, leading a 2011 migration from Blackboard to Canvas that made Howard CC one of the first institutions to adopt Canvas outside of the state of Utah. He also facilitated Howard Open, the College's Open Educational Resources (OER) initiative that seeks to support faculty who wish to adopt and implement OER in their courses in place of costly commercial textbooks. His professional interests include writing assessment, feedback practices, ungrading, mastery-based learning, and open pedagogy. He holds a master's degree in Education from Temple University, in Philadelphia, PA.)

4:30 pm	*Choose one of these two Concurrent Sessions*
Session 1	**Student Empowerment through Demystifying Assessment** **John Andelfinger, SUNY Orange, New York**
	While this presentation will primarily focus on the use of these terms/practices in composition classes, the presentation will attempt to help faculty from diverse disciplines understand how openly discussing assessment can empower students and demystify some of the assessment work being done across institutions. In this presentation, teaching "formative" and "summative" assessment -- as terms and practices -- to students in English composition courses can help students improve writing workshop practice and better utilize draft feedback. Additionally, this presentation will demonstrate how varying instructor feedback for student drafts can align with but also complicate notions of formative and summative assessment in ways that help students better understand their own writing practices and overall educational assessment experience.
Session 2	**A Newly Initiated Assessment Project** **Dr. Andrew G.D. Holmes, The University of Hull, United Kingdom**
	A newly initiated project is the development of students' assessment literacy and feedback literacy, something identified as a way forward of helping students to better understand assessment processes, develop skills and engage with feedback. The presentation will outline the scope of the project and what has been developed so far.
5:00 pm	*What's It Like for Them? A Student Panel* *Please see student panel poster for more information about our student participants*

In this panel, students will describe their experiences with alternative assessment and evaluation practices and what makes them most worthwhile.

Please see the attached poster on this presentation.

5:45 pm	*Choose one of these two Concurrent Sessions*
Session 1	*Simulated Clinical Competency Testing* **Eileen Giles & Lisa Cunningham, University of South Australia**

Radiation therapy (RT) students in their 4th year, work towards achieving competency in performing Computed Tomography (CT) scans for treatment planning in their final six months of training. This is primarily achieved on clinical placement in radiation therapy departments. This year in a pre-clinical workshop all students completed a simulated competency test prior to their placement via CT simulation software, authentic clinical equipment, documentation, and patient actors. All elements of acquiring an RT planning CT were assessed by this method. This gave students prior experience and confidence in gaining competence clinically on placement. Further, former clinicians were used as assessors in a mock interview assessment held via Zoom for final year radiation therapy students. This assessment gives students interview practice in a realistic setting, with pressure of assessment to help prepare them for pressure of real life interviews.

Session 2	*Adaptable Assessment Design* **Suzanne Wakim, Butte Community College, California**

How can we design classroom assignments that accurately assess learning and are flexible in times of emergency? Adaptable Assessment Design accomplishes this by allowing students to demonstrate learning utilizing their strengths. This separation of content assessment from assignment structure lowers external barriers, minimizes confounding variables, and is particularly important for marginalized students. Adaptable Assessments also provide flexibility in times of crisis because they are focused directly on learning Outcomes and can, therefore, take different forms based on the current circumstances. Adaptable Assessment Design is based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) which advocates for providing learners options in how they demonstrate learning. It utilized the Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) framework to develop clear and measurable assessments. This session will demonstrate how these frameworks can be used to design effective and engaging learning activities and assessments.

6:15 pm	*Choose one of these three Concurrent Sessions*
Session 1	*Engaging Students as Partners in Assessment: A General Education Case Study Proposal* **Madison Taber, Our Lady of the Lake University, Texas**

Across the world, educational practitioners have been called to explore and enhance the ways in which students can become more involved in the design and delivery of their own learning experiences. This call to action has led to a body of work and theoretical framework referred to as Students as Partners (SaP). These collaborative efforts operate under the viewpoint that students and staff can offer different but comparable forms of expertise that extends beyond the classroom. SaP operates as a form of student engagement, allowing students to feel heard by their professors and institutions. The proposed case study aims to explore SaP as a tool for enhancing continuous improvement efforts related to general education curriculum and assessment at a small, private, liberal arts institution. Further, this research will explore how engaging in assessment partnerships might impact student's sense of belonging and staff/faculty engagement.

Session 2	*Measuring the Authenticity of Contemporary Assessment Tasks: Revisiting the Authentic Assessment Framework a Decade After it was Created*

	Associate Professor Kelley Burton, University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland Australia
	Implementing authentic assessment tasks in higher education curriculum increases engagement, retention, and student awareness of future professional identity. This presentation revisits the discipline-generic features of authentic assessment in the Authentic Assessment Framework, which was created more than a decade ago to measure the authenticity of an assessment task and to enable comparisons with other assessment tasks. The Authentic Assessment Framework is applied to contemporary assessment tasks in law such as bail application, questioning of a witness in a criminal trial, reflective journaling on a real court visit, and a Moot Court simulation, conference paper abstract etc. As expected, some assessment tasks are more authentic than others. Notably, the authenticity of some tasks has improved over time because advances in technology have enabled students to access technology like that of the workplace. This presentation identifies opportunities for improving the authenticity of contemporary assessments over time.
Session 3	**Alternative Assessment in Asynchronous Courses** **Nadia Jaramillo, Oregon State University**
	Asynchronous courses have mostly used a "traditional" assessment structure that focuses on quizzes, discussion boards, and final papers. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic forced educators to explore alternative ways to not only provide evidence of student knowledge gains but to promote student agency, lifelong learning, and higher order thinking. The purpose of this presentation is to engage with the audience in a conversation about what alternative assessment means, examples of research-based assessments that go beyond the term paper, and design considerations (e.g., life cycle of assignments, rhetorical elements, heuristics) for alternative assessments in online and hybrid courses.
7:00 pm	**Until Next Time: Conference Closing** **Dr. Eliana Elkhoury**