

Appendix C

Assessing Student Learning in Blended Learning Classrooms

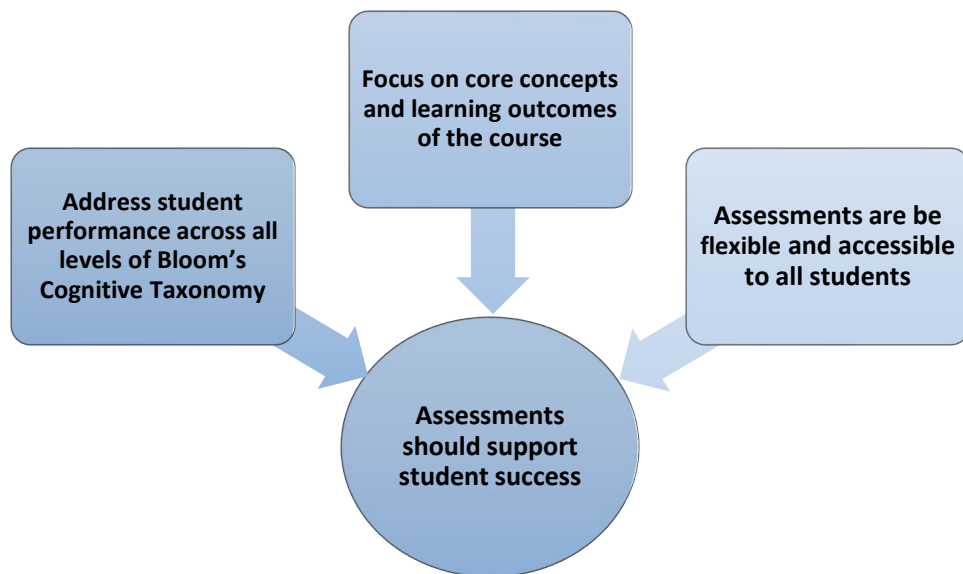
From the Instructional Playbook

Introduction

The Fall 2020 blended course poses unique factors when it comes to assessments of learning:

- Many classrooms may feature a mix of students participating face-to-face and online.
- Some assessment may happen both asynchronously and synchronously.
- It is important to consider that former assessment approaches may no longer be feasible for new class structures or as effective. Review your course assessments for blended learning models to consider assessment options.
- Final examinations will take place online, per the university.

While the format of assessments may change, evidence-based best practices of learning assessment remain largely the same. We encourage all faculty to consider effective strategies related to student-centered learning.



Check your assessments using:

- [OTEI Test Blueprint Guide](#)
- [OTEI Learning Focused Test Construction Guide](#)
- [Universal Design of Learning at Clemson Guide](#)

Clemson faculty want to encourage high student achievement and academic integrity in traditional, online, and blended learning classrooms. This short guide presents key questions to consider when designing assessments and offers some easy to use resources to help you. Check out the [array of resources on assessments](#) created by OTEI and review the prompts below to reflect on your assessment design.

Prompts to Help You Decide Assessment Formats That Will Work Best for Your Course

Ask yourself the following questions when designing assessments (assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, etc.) for your blended learning classroom to emphasize your use of student-centered assessment approaches:

1. Have you considered integrating more low-stakes assessments in place of a few high-stakes exams?

Challenge: Utilizing only a few large assessment opportunities (tests) may increase temptation for all students to cheat. It can also create additional anxiety and stress for students, particularly those participating online who may have technology issues.

Consider: Instead, consider a greater number of smaller assessments to check understanding throughout the course (e.g., quizzes, reflection papers, small projects or presentations). Check out this [Canvas help guide for creating different types of quizzes](#). Additionally, assessing student learning more frequently offers instructors the added benefit of gauging student learning and your own teaching effectiveness more often.

2. If using traditional testing formats for assessment, will you have students complete tests entirely online or will some students complete them F2F?

Challenges: Coordinating simultaneous exams for in-person and online student groups may pose challenges with time as you will need to design paper and digital versions of tests. It may also be difficult to manage students who need to ask questions, and students taking digital tests may face additional accessibility and technology issues.

Consider: Keep in mind some portion of your students may be participating solely online. To make the experience equitable, have all students complete the assessment online (simultaneously or asynchronously). Check with students to assure they are all in this time zone or adjust to accommodate different time zones.

You can encourage academic integrity by utilizing [screen monitoring software](#), but be aware that these programs are not without flaws and biases. For further information on CO support: <https://www.clemson.edu/online/tools/respondus.html>

For more research on integrity and testing, consult this list: Heard, C. (2020). Mitigating academic dishonesty in online testing: Bibliography. (Posted, open source online). Accessed June

23, 2020. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Zvmmidiw7D3MPaHmLHyCiG_BSZaNI0jxctuDurxZP_Kc/edit#heading=h.q9c04vvco4fo.

Other support for academic integrity comes from the Undergraduate Studies and the Graduate School.

3. *What types of questions will you utilize (e.g., multiple choice, short response, calculation), and will you ask students to show their work?*

Challenge: You may be concerned that exam formats with multiple choice and calculation questions may lead to increased incidences of academic misconduct for students participating online. Additionally, faculty and students in the spring 2020 experienced difficulty with test questions that included documenting calculation steps.

Consider: Revising test questions in the ways suggested next can further discourage cheating and can lead to better evaluation of student learning. If feasible for your class size, in place of content questions that can be easily discovered online:

- i. utilize short answer questions that require critical thinking;
- ii. have students create videos describing their problem solving;
- iii. ask them to submit illustrations or other visual representations of processes.
- iv. [Consult Clemson Online's tips for discouraging cheating](#)

When designing assessments, consider the practicality of grading in terms of your time as well as consistency of scoring (check out the [Creating Rubrics](#) guide to ensure equitable grading and this [Clemson Online guide for creating tests in Canvas](#).) Clemson Online supports a variety of [assessment tools](#).

4. *Will you only use one version of the assessment?*

Challenges: If you plan to have students complete the exam in-person and online you may need to create two forms of the exams, particularly if a large component requires students to record calculations. Some faculty may also be concerned about students completing assessments at different times and being tempted to share answers.

Consider: Creating a digital bank of questions (using test banks, shuffling questions, etc.) so that you can create multiple versions of an exam quickly and easily. This may allow students to take the exam at different times or allow one version for F2F students and another for online students. Please ensure that different versions reflect questions with the same level of difficulty.

5. *Have you considered alternative assessment formats?*

Challenge: Traditional exam formats can be problematic in terms of accessibility for many students both F2F and in online environments and may not be the most effective way to assess how well your students have met the learning goals of your course. While the type and size of some courses makes these alternatives unfeasible for replacing exams, these alternatives may be valuable options for smaller low-stakes assessments.

Consider: Check out the list of alternative assessment ideas presented in the OTEI Effective Online Teaching Canvas course (shown below).

10 Alternative Assessments

This information was originally posted by Rutgers at [https://sasoue.rutgers.edu/teaching-learning/remote-exams-assessment - special-advice-for-open-book-assessment-in-quantitative-courses](https://sasoue.rutgers.edu/teaching-learning/remote-exams-assessment-special-advice-for-open-book-assessment-in-quantitative-courses) ([Links to an external site](#)). This presentation by Karen Harris of Rutgers' Teaching and Learning with Technology presents an excellent list of 10 suggested alternatives to exams that can be aligned with many different subjects and goals.

1. Series of quizzes

- Offer a low-stakes opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery of material, and give you ongoing information about student understanding. Frequent quizzing has also been shown to reinforce student understanding. Both Canvas and Sakai can randomize questions in quizzes, making cheating more difficult.

2. Student-developed quiz questions

- Writing quiz questions both builds and demonstrates students' understanding of the material. This assignment can be structured as a collaborative group activity.

3. Open-book, take-home assessments

- Many disciplines already have a tradition of take-home exams, typically involving more conceptual or applied questions that students cannot quickly look up in a textbook.

4. Professional presentations or demonstrations

- Students can create audiovisual presentations using a variety of media, Powerpoint, Prezi, and other tools. (At Clemson, students have access to the Adobe suite, including Spark, Spark Video and Rush).

5. Annotated anthology or bibliography

- This project gives students choice in selecting works while assessing their higher-order abilities to evaluate sources, compare multiple perspectives, and provide rationales for their choices.

6. Fact sheet

- Students create a one-page fact sheet on a topic. Students must select relevant facts and explain them clearly and concisely.

7. Peer- and self-review activity

- These allow for personal reflection on learning and peer-to-peer instruction, both of which reinforce and deepen understanding. Students do need instruction in the task of providing constructive feedback. Targeted rubrics laying out expectations for student work are very helpful.

8. Digital portfolio

- A student-selected portfolio of work from the semester. Students compile their best or representative work from the semester, writing a critical introduction to the portfolio and a brief introduction to each piece. (Use Spark pages to create a portfolio of pages or post on Behance).

9. Non-traditional paper or project

- Creative assignments work best when they have some "real-world" relevance and offer students some choice in delivery format.

10. Group project

- Group projects require students to demonstrate mastery of subject matter and develop their ability to communicate and work collaboratively. It is crucial to make your assessment criteria and grading scheme clear, and to ensure that there are clear, explicit expectations for each team member.

Resources for Developing Assignments, Tests, and Test Questions

Creating blended assignment instructions. (2016). *Blended learning toolkit*. Retrieved from University of Central Florida website:
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Villarroel, V., Bloxham, S., Bruna, D., Bruna, C., & Herrera-Seda, C. (2018). Authentic assessment: Creating a blueprint for course design. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 43(5), 840-854.
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https://serc.carleton.edu/earth_rendezvous/2015/mini_workshops/mw11/index.html