

## Course Assessment Ideas

### 1) Match the assessment task to the learning objectives

- When designing an assessment task consider:
  - Types of assessments should be appropriate for the course materials and desired course outcomes.
  - Use quantitative assessment when objective and numeric assessment is needed.
  - Use qualitative assessment when that kind of thinking and writing is needed.
  - For group projects, use both group and individual measures.

*Reference:* Morgan, C. & O'Reilly (1999). Assessing open and distance learners. Sterling, Va: Stylus Publishing

### 2) Take precautions to limit the possibility of cheating

- Ways to minimize student cheating:
  - Relieve pressure by providing multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of course goals.
  - Create a meaningful assessment that is not overly long.
  - Administer assessment in small group sections where students are known and the student sense of accountability may be greater.
  - Create randomized tests.

*Reference:* McKeachie, W.J. (1999). Teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

### 3) Communicate assessment task clearly

- When creating an assessment:
  - Provide a rationale
  - Explain terms
  - Offer suggestions for methods of approach
  - Explain conventions that effect student response
  - Use short clear language written from a student perspective
  - Utilize a rubric for grading and feedback

*Reference:* Morgan, C. & O'Reilly (1999). Assessing open and distance learners. Sterling, Va: Stylus Publishing

### 4) Use formative assessment to promote deeper learning

- Utilize these kinds of assessment tools:
  - Portfolio to demonstrate learning outcomes
  - Journal entries for reflective learning
  - Discussions for peer engagement and content
  - Capstone projects for summative review

*Reference:* Askham, P. (1997). An instrumental response to the instrumental student: Assessment for learning. Studies in Educational Evaluation 23(4), 299-317.

## 5) Use self-assessment to improve learning and self-awareness

- Some conclusions about self-assessment include:
  - Use as formative assessment (students see their own progress)
  - Student that participate in self-assessment perform better on exams
  - Online technologies make self-assessment more feasible
  - Self-assessment is a valuable life skill that teaches student to become lifelong learners

*Reference:* Sluijsmans, F., Dochy, F., & Moerkerke, G. (1998). Creating a learning environment by using self-, peer-, and co-assessment. *Learning Environments Research* 1, 293-319.

## 6) Conduct peer-assessments among students

- Peer assessment is part of a learning process and can be part of the self-assessment process. It can contribute to building community as well as motivating students and group efforts.
- Below are three forms of peer-assessment:
  - Peer Ranking – from best to worst
  - Peer Nomination – based on standards
  - Peer Rating – based on multiple standards (rubrics)

*Reference:* Morgan, C. & O'Reilly (1999). *Assessing open and distance learners*. Sterling, Va: Stylus Publishing

## 7) Constantly evaluate your assessment practices

- Examine the following in assessment practices:
  - The appropriateness of the assessment item
  - Student responses (what is the student's perception, motivation or meaningful demonstration of learning?)
  - The nature and quality of feedback as it pertains to the learning outcomes
  - The nature and quality of the support (tutoring, etc.)
  - Be aware of your audience in regards to diversity and satisfaction of outcomes

*Reference:* Morgan, C. & O'Reilly (1999). *Assessing open and distance learners*. Sterling, Va: Stylus Publishing

*Adapted from:* <http://www.sanjuancollege.edu/pages/2852.asp>