



ASSESSMENT BASICS

Assessment is complicated on a good day, and far too broad of a topic to cover fully in a short document like this. Instead we will introduce some initial basics, then set you free to explore your options for your own purposes. Your goal should be to adjust your assessment plan to accommodate the constraints faced in the online and socially distanced course setup.

4 Quadrants of Assessment		Assessment Target	
		Student Learning	Student Experience
Assessment Audience	Instructor	Assigning grades Preparing for class Adjusting focus	Course correction & iterative improvement
	Students	Supported practice & feedback Reflection	Sharing & normalizing experiences

Assessment Outcome

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING

One way to think about assessment is in terms of the audience and goal for the assessment. For example, one reason we have students take final exams so that we can assign final grades. This is a prime example of an assessment of student learning where the instructor is the audience. We can also use an array of other assessments of student learning to inform our teaching going forward. For example, a midterm exam, in-class exercise, homework set, or short essay not only allows us to assign grades to students, but also gives us information about the progress our students are making in the course. This can help us adjust our approach in the course to best serve the learning needs of our students.

These types of assessments can also be useful for students, who get the benefit of feedback on their learning through their experience with the process, grades on completed work, and other feedback received in response to their efforts.

In a more extended resource about the assessment of student learning we would focus in on the use of [classroom assessment techniques](#), how to construct [effective quiz questions](#), the nature of [authentic assessments](#), beneficial [grading practices](#), and so on. But for now let's assume that you already have ideas or a plan for assessment in a face-to-face version of your course. You probably also already have a sense of some of the options and challenges associated with a move to online or socially distanced instruction.

Use the remainder of this document to help identify the challenges, options, and opportunities for assessment choices in your Fall 2020 courses. Along the way you may also find [this resource](#) (from our very own Office of Online Learning) helpful. [This post](#) may also help to raise your awareness about possible assessment strategies in the online space.

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ATTENDANCE

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? If you award points to your students for attendance at class, you probably have good reason to do so. For example, if in-person attendance is a key part of the learning experience, you may award points in order to incentivize your students' presence. In the best of times there are a number of questions to ask yourself before attaching points to attendance. In COVID times there are a few more. For example, what counts as "attendance" in the online space? What additional barriers might your students face in their efforts to comply with course attendance policies? How will you monitor remote attendance (e.g., through a Zoom connection)? What accommodations will you need to provide for medically fragile students who are unable to attend class in person?

Ultimately, it's probably best to avoid an attendance requirement for your course, but you can instead think about whether it would make sense to monitor students' levels of *participation* in your course. See the [Participation](#) section below for more information on this.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE

- [Debate: Attendance-based Grades are Fair to Students](#)
- [Individual Differences and Course Attendance](#)

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GROUP PROJECTS AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? The main new thing to take into account for group projects in our current context is that there are additional barriers in place for students to connect and work with one another. You can help by providing mechanisms to facilitate their cooperation and connection, and offer options for students who need alternatives. For asynchronous online courses you should also keep in mind that the ability to have students work together in groups may require some additional tweaking, as they may or may not be able to connect with one another all at the same time.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- [Online Students Don't Have to Work Solo](#)
- [Creating Groups in eLC](#)
- [Zoom Help for Students](#)
- [What is Cooperative Learning](#)

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HANDS-ON SKILLS, ARTISTIC WORK, AND LABS

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? Let's face it: some skills and work just require an in-person touch. Sure, maybe you can rig something up to have students record their work or engagement with a process, and sometimes simulations are available to help with our teaching, but sometimes we just plain need our students to be able to engage in a space with specific equipment, getting practice and demonstrating proficiency.

If you teach classes that face this challenge by virtue of your discipline (e.g., language learning, chemistry labs, and ceramics), you should start by talking with your unit leadership and drawing on discipline-specific resources that have gained prominence over the last few months. Alternatively, take some time to return to your learning outcomes, and think about whether there are ways for you to assess the skills in question in a different or new way. There might be some new options available to you.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- [Remotely Hands-On](#)
- [Hands-On Classes Learn to be Hands-Off, Online](#)

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PARTICIPATION

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? Participation and attendance often go hand-in-hand, and instructors often assign points to students for their levels of engagement in a course rather than just their presence or attendance. As discussed [above](#), this is all a bit more complicated in the midst of our current circumstances. In addition to questions about barriers to attendance and how to monitor student presence, there is also a question about what counts as quality participation in the online setting. If you want to include participation as part of your assessment of student learning, you should think carefully about (1) the equitability and nature of their opportunities for engagement in the course, and (2) how you will communicate your expectations and associated grading criteria to your students.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- [How Do I Assess Participation Online?](#)
- [Increasing Student Motivation and Participation](#)
- [40 Things You Can Do to Retain and Engage Students](#)

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PRESENTATIONS AND ORAL COMMUNICATION

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? In a socially distanced class with varied classroom presence, it's difficult to get the formula just right for student presentations. In addition to the need to get the technology just right, it's not a straightforward process to have one or some students present live to a group of face-to-face students (and vice versa). In an asynchronous online course you have the added complication of not being able to have students all together at the same time, and so traditional presentations are not a good option.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- [An Interactive Online Approach to Small-Group Student Presentations and Discussions](#)
- [Moving Student Presentations Online](#)

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PROBLEM SETS

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? Oftentimes students collaborate with one another when working through homework problem sets. This can be a good way for students to engage in the learning process, but presents a small complication when they can't easily connect with each other in a face-to-face environment.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- [DAE Tutoring](#)
- [How Students are Leveraging Online Study Groups](#)
- [Creating Groups in eLC](#)
- [Zoom Help for Students](#)

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RESEARCH/LIBRARY CENTRIC WORK

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? It's hard to do research requiring the use of traditional library services or archival items, when you can't get there in person. Fortunately, University Libraries have plenty of digital collections and repositories to explore, library databases and eBooks are available via remote login, and librarians are available via online chat or email.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE

- [UGA Library Resources and Services](#)

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TESTS, QUIZZES, AND EXAMS

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? Tests and exams tend to be high-stakes assessment tools, which means that the pressure to perform well is increased. When students complete these assessments in a face-to-face environment we can generally limit their use of outside aids. But of course when students are taking a test remotely we are less able to control or oversee their access to additional aids, and those aids are generally right at their fingertips. And so we worry about students cheating on these tests – whether it be through the use of online forums like [Chegg](#) and [GroupMe](#), referring to their textbooks and other course materials while they work, or simply getting live help from another individual while they work.

If you are using testing in your course, start by reflecting on the following questions:

1. What, specifically, am I trying to assess with your test?
2. Is there an alternative way I might assess my students' learning, besides a test?
3. What can I do to reduce students' ability or pressure to cheat? For example, timed open-note tests can work in a lot of contexts.

A WORD ON REMOTE PROCTORING TOOLS AT UGA

- SACSCOC requires that if students are going to be charged a fee for identify verification services (including remote proctoring), they must have this information at the time of registration.
- UGA does not currently have a free-to-students remote proctoring tool in place (although some individual units may have options in place). A plan is forthcoming.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- [Proctored Exam Alternatives](#)
- [Alternative Assessment Strategies](#)
- [A New Definition of Rigor](#)
- [The 10 Most Creative Final Exams Ever Offered](#)

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WRITTEN WORK AND CASE STUDIES

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? Written work itself is a great way to both assess and develop certain types of skills and knowledge. Fortunately, there are not too many problems introduced by a shift to online, remote, or socially distanced teaching. The main thing to think about is how you can and will support student progress along the way, and how you might leverage technology to engage students in peer feedback on their teaching.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- [Resources from UGA's Writing Intensive Program](#)
- [Writing assignments across the curriculum](#)
- [Assessment by Case Studies](#)
- [UGA Libraries Plagiarism Resource](#)

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