Facilitator Guide:

Assessment in Online Environments

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About the Guide

This guide is meant for facilitators who will be leading the Assessment in Online Environments module in online, face-to-face, or blended learning environments.

The guide includes suggested teaching and learning activities for both online and face-to-face delivery. The activities may be mixed or modified for a blended learning experience.

All activities and content in this module are customizable and may be modified for your purposes.

Module Overview

The goal of this module is for participants to develop strategies for planning assessment, grading student work, and providing effective feedback in online learning environments.

Assessment is a central component of any learning program. It helps instructors to provide effective feedback to students and to ensure that stated learning outcomes have been met. Instructors may have a great deal of experience with assessment and a seemingly endless set of assessments from which to draw. Based on the principles of constructive alignment, this module helps to guide instructors in their choice of assessment tools in online learning environments. It also provides an overview of the differences and overlaps between formative and summative assessment, various assessment tools (see Appendix B), the characteristics of effective feedback, the development of grading rubrics (see Appendix C), and the use of self and peer assessment in online learning environments.

We recommend that this module follow the one on Learning Outcomes. However, to ensure that you can still use this as a standalone module, we have included an overview of the relationship between learning outcomes and assessment in the first part of this module.

Lesson Plan

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, participants should be able to:

* Explain the purpose of assessment from the perspective of constructive alignment;
* Distinguish between formative and summative assessment;
* Identify characteristics of effective feedback;
* Select a grading rubric for an online assessment;
* Determine when self and peer assessments might be effective and viable options.

Topics and Subtopics

* Place and Purpose of Assessment
  + Assessment in Constructive Alignment
* Types of Assessment
  + Formative Assessment
  + Summative Assessment
  + Assessment Tools and Activities
* Effective Feedback through Grading Rubrics
  + Characteristics of Effective Feedback
  + Grading Rubrics
* Self and Peer Assessment

## Teaching and Learning Activities (Online Delivery)

**1. Content Delivery:** Participants view “Introduction”, which includes the module learning goals and outcomes (alternatively, you can post the module learning outcomes directly on the course site).

**Approximate run time:** 1 minute

**2.** **Reading/Reflection:** Provide participants with the following instructions:

1. Read at least one article about online assessment (see suggested readings below):    
     
   The Online Educator's Complete Guide to Grading Assignments, Part 1 - [http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/the-online-educators-complete-guide-to-grading-assignments-part-1/](http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/the-online-educators-complete-guide-to-grading-assignments-part-1/%20) and The Online Educator's Complete Guide to Grading Assignments, Part 2 - <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/the-online-educators-complete-guide-to-grading-assignments-part-2/> (total of 11 paragraphs across the two readings)  
     
   E-Pedagogy and E-Assessment <http://caaconference.co.uk/pastConferences/2008/proceedings/Elliott_B_final_formatted_i1.pdf> (16 pages long; gives overview of learning theories and theory and practical considerations)
2. Read the article(s), with the following question in mind: Why do we assess students in our courses?

**3.** **Content Delivery:** Participants view “Place & Purpose of Assessment”, which includes the following components:

1. Video: Place of Assessment in Course Design (instructors talk about the relationship between assessment and learning outcomes)
2. Activity: Choose one assessment strategy for the learning outcome
3. Slide: Assessing Learning Outcomes

**Approximate run time:** 10 - 15 minutes

**4.** **Content Delivery:** Participants view “Types of Assessment”, which includes the following components:

1. Slides: Types of Assessments
2. Slides: Formative Assessment
3. Pause and Think: How do you think using more formative assessments impacts students’ online learning experiences?
4. Slides: Summative Assessment
5. Pause and Think: Do you use both formative and summative assessment in your courses? How do you think students' learning experiences may be affected by the use of both formative and summative assessment?
6. Video: Assessment Tools and Activities
7. Activity: Assessment Tools (Download Assessment Tools and Activities handout; Consider the assessment ideas in relation to a learning outcome for a course; Select an assessment tool to measure student achievement of the learning outcome; Explain your choice)

**Approximate run time:** 30 minutes

**5.** **Content Delivery:** Participants view “Effective Feedback through Grading Rubrics”, which includes the following components:

1. Slides: Characteristics of Effective Feedback
2. Slides: What is a Rubric?
3. Video: Advantages and Disadvantages of Rubrics (instructors talk about advantages and disadvantages of grading rubrics)
4. Slides: Where to Get Ideas for Rubrics

**Approximate run time:** 20 minutes

**6. Activity: Adapting a Grading Rubric**

Ask participants to refer to the handout, *Grading Rubric for Online Discussion Post*s (See Appendix D. You may email the handout or post a copy on your LMS). Ask them to look over the rubric and come up with two ways they could adapt it to grade online discussion post contributions for students in one of their own courses. You may ask participants to submit the activity to you for feedback.

**7. Content Delivery:** **Self and Peer Assessment**

Ask participants to view the video “Self and Peer Assessment”

[https://mediaserver.carleton.ca/media/self-and-peer-evaluation](https://mediaserver.carleton.ca/media/self-and-peer-evaluation%20)  Prompt participants to reflect on the following questions as they watch the video:

(1) What is the purpose of peer and self-evaluation? (2) What is the impact of peer and self-evaluation on learning? and (3) When might it be useful to include peer and self-evaluation in online courses?

**8. Activity:** **Discussion Board**

Create a discussion board called Assessment and Evaluation and post the following instructions for participants:

1. Retrieve the activity you completed in the Types of Assessment section (Download Assessment Tools and Activities handout\*; Consider the assessment ideas in relation to a learning outcome for a course; Select an assessment tool to measure student achievement of the learning outcome; Explain your choice).
2. Think about how you would evaluate your assessment. Would you use a grading rubric? Why/why not? Would you use peer or self-evaluation? Why/why not?
3. Post your reflections to the discussion board and provide feedback to at least two other participants.

\* You may want to post a copy of the Assessment Tools and Activities handout to the LMS. See Appendix B.

## Teaching and Learning Activities (Face-to-Face Delivery)

Approximate Duration: 3 hours with 15 min break

Recommended Materials:Flipchart or whiteboard, markers or whiteboard markers, laptop with projector and speakers, cue cards

**1.** **Pre-Session Activity**: Prior to the session, it is recommended that you ask participants to read an article about online assessment. Our recommendations are as follows:

* The Online Educator's Complete Guide to Grading Assignments, **Part 1** - http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/the-online-educators-complete-guide-to-grading-assignments-part-1/ and The Online Educator's Complete Guide to Grading Assignments, **Part 2** - <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/the-online-educators-complete-guide-to-grading-assignments-part-2/> (total of 11 paragraphs across the two parts)
* E-Pedagogy and E-Assessment (16 pages; gives overview of learning theories and theory and practical considerations) - <http://caaconference.co.uk/pastConferences/2008/proceedings/Elliott_B_final_formatted_i1.pdf>

**2.** **Introduction to Module & Agenda (5 mins):**

Introduce yourself and explain your role at the school. You can edit slide to insert name, position, contact info. Lead participants through goal and learning outcomes of module. Provide an overview of how session will be divided.

**3.** **Content Delivery: Assessment and Constructive Alignment (5 mins)**

Show the video “The Place of Assessment in Course Design” <https://mediaserver.carleton.ca/media/the-place-of-assessment-in-course-design>.

Depending on whether or not you include the module on learning outcomes in your professional development program, this may be a review or it may be new to participants. Our recommendation is for this module to follow the one on writing learning outcomes. If you follow this suggestion, it might be a good idea to ask participants to bring those learning outcomes with them to today’s session in order to create a sense of continuity across the PD program.

**4.** **Group Discussion: Assessing Learning Outcomes (10 mins)**

Facilitate a group discussion around the following question: Based on the content presented (i.e. slides about constructive alignment or video), what is the main purpose of assessment from the perspective of constructive alignment?

**5.** **Content Delivery: Types of Assessment (10 mins)**

Lead participants through distinguishing features of formative and summative assessments as well as the relationships between them and how they can be utilized in online learning environments

**6.** **Group Discussion: Online Formative Assessments (5 – 10 mins)**

Facilitate a 5-10 minute discussion about how formative assessment impacts students’ online learning experiences. Throughout the discussion, take some time to point out overlaps and differences in participants’ responses, and ask for clarification where possible. If it does not come up in the discussion, make sure you highlight the role of ongoing formative assessment in (1) increasing and maintaining student interaction with content and (2) making sure students don’t see themselves as passive recipients of information who can passively absorb the online presentation of content.

**7.** **Content Delivery: Assessment Tools & Activities (2 – 5 mins)**

Show the video “Assessment Tools for Online Courses” <https://mediaserver.carleton.ca/media/assessment-tools-for-online-courses>.

Prompt participants to take note of any assessment tools they might want to try in their own online or blended courses.

**8.** **Activity: Assessment Tools (20 mins)**

Direct participants to the handout, *Assessment Tools and Activities*, which explains how they could use the assessment methods listed on slide 16 in online learning environments (see Appendix B). Ask participants to (1) consider the assessment ideas presented in the video and listed on the handout in relation to a learning outcome for a course they are (or will be) teaching; (2) to select one of the ideas from the video or handout that they could use to check if students have met that learning outcome; and (3) explain their choice. Give participants 5-10 minutes to look over the handout and answer the questions. Ask for volunteers to share their ideas and facilitate a 10 minute discussion where participants can build on each other’s ideas.

**9.** **Content Delivery: Effective Feedback (2 mins)**

Lead participants through the slide explaining the importance of effective feedback for student learning.

**10.** **Group Discussion: Effective Feedback (5 mins)**

Slide 18 provides participants with an example of effective feedback. In pairs, ask participants to take 2 minutes to discuss this feedback and identify the characteristics that make this feedback effective. After 2 minutes, ask pairs to share their answers with the rest of the group.

Some possible answers are: (1) begins with what student did well; (2) explains what makes it a good explanation; (3) focuses on changeable behaviour (writing sentence fragments); (4) suggests way to improve.

**11.** **Content Delivery: Effective Feedback (5 mins)**

Lead participants through the characteristics of effective feedback and refer back to their responses from the previous discussion where possible.

**12.** **Content Delivery: Defining Rubrics (5 mins)**

Explain what rubrics are and their potential for providing effective feedback while managing time and ensuring consistency of grading between TAs. If your learning management system has a feature that allows instructors to build rubrics within the system, alert participants to this possibility.

**Note:** Slide 18 may be replaced with the video “Assessment with Rubrics in Online Environments” <https://mediaserver.carleton.ca/media/assessment-with-rubrics-in-online-environments>.

**13.** **Group Discussion: Advantages & Disadvantages of Rubrics (5 – 10 mins)**

Lead a 5-10 minute group discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of using grading rubrics.

Summarize answers and add to the discussion through information on slide 22.

**14.** **Content Delivery: Ideas for Rubrics (5 mins)**

Explain to participants where they can get ideas for rubrics. Provide participants with the following two handouts: *Creating a Grading Rubric* and *Grading Rubric for Online Discussion Posts*, taken from (Solan and Linardopoulos 2011) (see Appendix C and Appendix D for the handouts).

**15.** **Activity: Adapting a Grading Rubric (25 mins)**

Ask participants to refer to the handout, *Grading Rubric for Online Discussion Post*s. Give participants 10 minutes to look over the rubric and come up with two ways they could adapt it to grade online discussion post contributions for students in one of their own courses. Ask for volunteers to share their strategies and explain them in relation to the learning outcomes for their own course. Allocate 15 minutes for this discussion.

**16.** **Content Delivery: Self and Peer Assessment (10 – 15 mins)**

Begin this section by explaining the usefulness of self and peer assessment as a learning tool for students as well as a way of helping to manage grading in large online courses.

Option 1: Show the video “Self and Peer Evaluation” in which instructors discuss their inclusion of self and peer assessment in courses <https://mediaserver.carleton.ca/media/self-and-peer-evaluation>.

Option 2: Ask participants if any of them have ever used peer and self-evaluation in courses as students or instructors. Ask them to elaborate on their experience, explaining what they learned in the process of using these assessment methods, if they would consider using them again, and how they might do so (e.g. how they would be graded).

**17.** **Activity: Think, Ink, Pair, Share (25 – 30 mins)**

Distribute cue cards to participants. Give participants 2-5 minutes to write down their thoughts on the following: (1) the purpose of peer and self-evaluation, (2) its impact on learning, and (3) when it might be useful to include it in online courses.

Ask participants to turn to a neighbour and share their answers with one another. Encourage them to ask each other for clarification if necessary and to discuss whether or not they would include self- or peer-evaluations in online learning environments for their courses and to explain why or why not. Give participants 5 minutes for paired discussion.

Ask a few pairs to share their answers with the larger group. Facilitate a 10 minute discussion, pointing out where there is disagreement and agreement about when and how participants would use self- and peer-evaluation in online courses. As you facilitate the discussion, whenever possible how the online environment might help or hinder with participants’ suggestions.

Wrap-up the discussion by pulling together the key points made about the use of self- and peer-assessment.

**18.** **Wrap-up and Questions (10 mins):**

Briefly summarize the main points and ask if participants have any final questions.

Additional Resources and References

Andrade, HG. (2000). Using Rubrics to Promote Thinking and Learning. Educational  
 Leadership, 57(5), 13-18.

Mertler, Craig A. (2001). Designing scoring rubrics for your classroom. Practical Assessment,  
 Research & Evaluation, 7(25). Retrieved from  
 http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=25.

Elliot, B. (2008). E-Pedagogy and E-Assessment: Paper presented at the Twelfth International  
 Computer Assisted Assessment (CAA) Conference, Leicestershire, UK. Retrieved from http://caaconference.co.uk/pastConferences/2008/proceedings/El liott\_B\_final\_formatted\_i1.pdf.

Solan, AM, and N Linardopoulos. (2011). Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of a  
 Grading Rubric for Online Discussions. Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, 7(4),  
 452. Retrieved from http://jolt.merlot.org/vol7no4/linardopoulos\_1211.htm.

Sull, EC. The Online Educator's Complete Guide to Grading Assignments, Part 1. Faculty  
 Focus. Retrieved from http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/the- online-educators-complete-guide-to-grading-assignments-part-1/.

Sull, EC. (2012, May). The Online Educator's Complete Guide to Grading Assignments, Part 2.  
 Faculty Focus. Retrieved from http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/the- online-educators-complete-guide-to-grading-assignments-part-2/.

Appendix A: Module Slides and Notes (Face-to-Face)

Slide 1



Slide 2



**Introduce yourself and explain your role at the school. You may edit slide to insert name, position, contact info.**

**If this is the first of a series of modules, spend a little bit of time giving overview of the program. You may wish to insert a slide or two with that information.**

Slide 3



The goal of this module is for you to be exposed to some of the key considerations for planning assessment, grading, and feedback strategies for an online or blended course or module.

**After introducing the goal, lead participants through learning outcomes. Explain that what they are working on today is deciding how learning outcomes, such as these, may help them to plan out their assessment strategies.**

Slide 4



**Provide an overview of how the session will be divided (if a different order makes more sense for your context, please feel free to reorder the slides and include additional materials).**

Slide 5



Assessments have a central place in course design, whether for face-to-face, blended, or online classes.

Slide 6



**Play the video “The Place of Assessment In Course Design” (see Facilitator Guide for link to video).**

[**https://mediaserver.carleton.ca/media/the-place-of-assessment-in-course-design**](https://mediaserver.carleton.ca/media/the-place-of-assessment-in-course-design)

**Depending on whether or not you include the module on learning outcomes in your professional development program**, **this may be a review or it may be new to participants. Our recommendation is for this module to follow the one on writing learning outcomes. If you follow this suggestion, it might be a good idea to ask participants to bring those learning outcomes with them to today’s session in order to create a sense of continuity across the PD program.**

Let’s start our discussion today by considering why we include assessments in our courses. Assessment plays a critical role in course design and has benefits for students and teachers. It’s critical to the sense of continuity across courses to make the purpose of assessment explicit and to communicate these to students. As you watch this video, think about the reasons we include assessments in our courses and what parts of the class we need to align it with.

Slide 7



You probably already have quite a bit of experience designing assessments but, following the video you just watched, what would you say is the main purpose of assessment from a constructive alignment perspective?

**As the discussion (15 minutes) takes place, use a whiteboard or flipchart paper to keep track of some of the common purposes brought up by participants.**

Slide 8



Although assessments have the same general role of giving students the chance to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes, different types of assessment can have more focused purposes. Assessment types can be distinguished by their purpose (formative vs. summative) or by the specific activity (e.g. wiki, paper, blog, oral presentation, online discussion posts). Let’s start our discussion of types of assessment by distinguishing between formative and summative assessments.

Slide 9



Formative assessments are often referred to as assessments FOR learning. What is particularly important with formative assessments is that they are, first and foremost, ways for students to get immediate feedback on their comprehension or application of course content. The defining characteristic of formative assessment is the feedback loop, which is a way for instructors to correct misunderstandings or errors and to guide students’ learning and their own teaching. Within online learning environments, most learning management systems allow for formative assessments to be built in to the design of modules to check for comprehension along the way. You might, for example, present a video overview of a new concept and then have students respond to a brief set of multiple choice questions to check for their comprehension. In these contexts, not only can the feedback loop be integrated into the presentation of material, it can also be automated in most learning management systems.

Slide 10



Summative assessment, as the name implies, summarizes students’ learning. You can have a summative assessment at the end of each unit in a course. In such cases, these assessments can be simultaneously summative (in that they summarize learning in a unit) and formative (because students get feedback that prepares them for the next section of the course). At the end of a course, when students submit final projects or write final exams, the feedback they get helps to prepare them for their next course. In other words, summative end-of-year projects and exams also provide formative feedback for the teacher to help them with revising the course for the following year. In this sense, formative and summative assessments are not mutually exclusive because summative assessments can be important sources of feedback.

Slide 11



With this background knowledge in mind, how do you think using more formative assessments impacts students’ online learning experiences?

**Facilitate a 5-10 minute discussion about how formative assessment impacts students’ online learning experiences. Throughout the discussion, take some time to point out overlaps and differences in participants’ responses, and ask for clarification where possible. If it does not come up in the discussion, make sure you point out the role of ongoing formative assessment in (1) increasing and maintaining student interaction with content and (2) making sure students don’t see themselves as passive recipients of information.**

Slide 12



**You may wish to delete this slide and go right into a discussion of different assessment tools/activities that would match up with participants’ stated learning outcomes for their own modules.**

**Show the video Assessment Tools for Online Courses (see Facilitator Guide for link to video). The video shows a few instructors, each discussing one assessment tool they have used in an online course.**

[**https://mediaserver.carleton.ca/media/assessment-tools-for-online-courses**](https://mediaserver.carleton.ca/media/assessment-tools-for-online-courses)

As you watch the video, take note of any assessment tools you might want to try in your own online or blended courses.

Slide 13



Along with the ideas in the video, the handout Assessment Tools and Activities, has explanations of the tools and activities listed on this slide. With the ideas from the video and the handout in mind, take a few minutes to select an assessment you could use to check if students have met a learning outcome for a course you teach.

**Give participants 15 minutes to go through the handout and write down how they would use their selected tool to assess the learning outcome (e.g. What questions might they ask? What instructions would they give?). Ask for volunteers to share their ideas and facilitate a 10 minute discussion where participants can build on each other’s ideas.**

Slide 14



Assessments work best as learning tools when they are followed up by effective feedback. Although there are different ways of providing feedback, a few things are particularly important to keep in mind when you provide feedback to students.

Slide 15



Above is an example of effective feedback an instructor or TA has given on a student’s written response. In pairs, take 2 minutes to discuss this feedback and identify the characteristics that make this feedback effective.

**After 2 minutes, ask pairs to share their answers. Some possible answers are: (1) begins with what student did well; (2) explains what makes it a good explanation; (3) focuses on changeable behaviour (writing sentence fragments); (4) suggests way to improve.**

Slide 16



**Lead participants through the characteristics of effective feedback and refer back to their responses from the previous discussion where possible.**

The most important thing that makes feedback effective is its timeliness. If it is given too late, its importance may be diminished, information may be lost, and learners may do not have the chance to correct errors or duplicate what worked well before the next task. This is one area where online tools can be useful. Many tools offer the option of having automated feedback built into modules that students complete online.

Second, effective feedback focuses on changeable actions (i.e. what the person did or the characteristics of the performance and suggests how the learner can improve in the future).

Third, you want to make sure that you give specific feedback about a student’s strengths. It is not enough just to say “this is excellent.” Instead, you want to tell students precisely what made their work excellent to make sure they know to keep and repeat those elements of their work on the next task.

Fourth, you want to make sure the feedback is balanced. Where possible, start with what worked well, suggest improvements, and then conclude by referencing something positive. Again, make sure you do not only focus on negative or positive points because students may be left wondering what they did well or what they did wrong.

Finally, try to make sure the feedback is given in manageable amounts. Remember that if you state every single flaw, it may be too overwhelming to digest or too disheartening to figure out how to improve. Ask yourself, what are the most important things for the student to correct at this point? In other words, scaffold the feedback to scaffold the learning.

So you might be wondering, “how do I do all of this effectively and efficiently, particularly in large classes?” or “how do I make sure teaching assistants keep all of these things in mind as they grade?”

Slide 17



One way to manage all of these tasks is to create and use grading rubrics, especially for written assignments. A rubric is a tool you or your TAs can use to assign grades to students’ work. It’s a good idea to provide it in advance so students have a clear sense of what’s expected for an assessment. A rubric usually consists of a table that lists the areas on which students are being graded in the first column and the range of grades across the top row. The remaining cells of the rubric identifies the characteristics of that portion of the assessment criteria that are required to receive a specific grade.

Slide 18



**Note: This slide may be replaced with the video “Assessment with Rubrics in the Online Environment” which includes instructors and/or educational developers talking about why they would recommend using rubrics for grading (see the Facilitator Guide for link to video).**

We’ve identified some disadvantages to using rubrics (e.g. take a lot of time to construct) – **refer to points raised in earlier discussion.**

The most commonly stated disadvantages are that rubrics can feel constraining (or that they don’t leave for spontaneity or creativity), they take a lot of time to create, and because you need to create them in advance, they front load the work of grading.

They are a common and useful tool, though, and it is worth considering how you might want to use them in any of your courses. Although they do take some time to construct, they also help with cutting down on grading time later on. You can give students specific comments to build on what is included in the rubric, but you have a starting point for *explaining* their grades. In the educational community, rubrics are recommended as a way to ensure: (1) TAs grade assignments more consistently; (2) students can identify where and how to improve their work; (3) grading is item or criterion based, rather than relative to other students; and (4) students, TAs, and instructor have a shared sense of expectations.

In online environments, learning management systems often have capabilities for creating a grading rubric template and adapting it for each assignment in a course. In this case, graders would click the appropriate boxes and add a few personalized comments while the system tallies the grades and enters them into your grade book.

Slide 19



If you are not sure where to get ideas for creating grading rubrics, you can start by talking to colleagues, visiting your institution’s teaching and learning centre, checking for them in education journals, reading the Creating a Grading Rubric Handout, or visiting the rCampus rubrics gallery.

**Provide participants with the following two handouts: Creating a Grading Rubric and Grading Rubric for Online Discussion Posts, taken from (Solan and Linardopoulos 2011).**

Slide 20



**Ask participants to refer to the handout, Grading Rubric for Online Discussion Posts. Give participants 20 minutes** **to look over the rubric and come up with two ways they could adapt it to grade online discussion post contributions for students in one of their own courses. Ask for volunteers to share their strategies and explain them in relation to the learning outcomes for their own course. Allocate 15 minutes for this discussion.**

Slide 21



Aside from thinking about what to assess and how to grade, it is important to think about when it might be effective to get students involved in assessing their own performance or that of their peers. Students learn a lot by assessing and reflecting on their own performance. Self and peer assessments require clear guidelines (perhaps even a rubric) to be supplied by the instructor, but they are also one way to increase students’ interactions with their peers and the course content, both of which are central to the success of an online course. Especially in large courses where online activities are taking place, you might need to rely on automated feedback as well as self and peer assessment to make the workload manageable and to maintain students’ engagement in the online learning environment.

Slide 22



Before we start talking about when and how you might want to involve students in grading, let’s hear about some other instructors’ experiences with self and peer assessment.

**Option 1: Show the video “Self and Peer Evaluation” in which instructors discuss their inclusion of self and peer assessment in courses (see Facilitator Guide for link to video).**

**<https://mediaserver.carleton.ca/media/self-and-peer-evaluation>**

**Option 2: Ask participants if any of them have ever used self and peer evaluation in courses as students or instructors. Ask them to elaborate on their experience, explaining what they learned in the process of using these evaluation methods, if they would consider using them again, and how they might do so (e.g. how they would be graded).**

Slide 23



**Distribute cue cards to participants. Ask them to use the cue cards to write a paragraph reflecting on (1) the purpose of self and peer evaluation, (2) its impact on learning, and (3) when it might be useful to include it in online courses.**

**Give participants 2 minutes to write down their thoughts.**

**Ask participants to turn to a neighbour and share their answers with one another. Encourage them to ask each other for clarification if necessary and to discuss whether or not they would include self- or peer - evaluations in online learning environments for their courses and to explain why or why not.**

**Give participants 5 minutes for paired discussion. Then ask pairs to share their answers with larger group. Facilitate 10 minute discussion, pointing out where there is disagreement and agreement about when and how participants would use self and peer evaluation in online courses. As you facilitate the discussion, whenever possible how the online environment might help or hinder with participants’ suggestions.**

**Wrap-up the discussion by pulling together the key points made about the use of self and peer assessment.**

Slide 24



**Summarize the main points from the session. Use examples from earlier discussion with participants if possible.**

Slide 25



Slide 26



Slide 27



Appendix B: Assessment Tools and Activties

Keep in mind that your choice of assessment tools should always relate back to the stated learning outcomes for the course. Where possible, think about how you will grade these activities in advance – otherwise, you might have students submit an assignment and then realize you have set a difficult task for the teaching assistants or for yourself. You can also develop grading rubrics to help with marking student submissions (see *Creating a Grading Rubric* and *Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion Posts*). Here are a few suggestions for assessment activities you can incorporate into a course’s online learning environment:

* Self-performance review
  + Consider giving students a rubric they can use to assess their own performance. You can have them rate themselves on the frequency of their log-ins, their time-management skills, their contributions to discussions, their engagement with their peers, etc. Perhaps you can also ask them to write a paragraph of additional comments about their performance in the online learning environment.
* Case study analysis
  + In some courses, you can check students’ ability to apply knowledge through case study analysis. You can have one ongoing case that you use as an example throughout the duration of the course, returning to it to add to the depth and complexity of analysis. Provide students with this case at the beginning of the term and let them know that they will become really familiar with it. Perhaps you can present the case through video. Each week, students can post their answers a question about new content by relating it to the shared cases study. To assist with your workload, you can have students submit their answers in groups, alternate the weeks of their posts, or have them rate each other’s posts using a shared rubric.
* Blog
  + Blogs are a common mode of written online communication. They are shorter than essays, and they are a great avenue for students to develop written communication skills because they require regular updates. Blogging about course content makes writing a habitual practice. Some learning management systems will allow you to set up blogs that are hosted on your educational institution’s secure server so that students are not required to post to public forums. Blogs can be set up as individual or group activities and you can ask students to alternate between contributing their own blog posts and commenting on those of their colleagues. You can also publish the blog posts yourself (or ask TAs to do so) and give students the task of commenting on instructor or TA initiated posts.
* Scaffolded project (individual or group)
  + You can set up scaffolded research projects in online learning environments. One week, students can be asked to upload a link to a resource and a description of that link. The following week, they could post a choice of two course concepts that could be applied to explain or analyze certain elements of the resource as well as definitions of those concepts. The next week, students could post one analytic post applying one of the concepts to their resource. The idea here is that each week students would add to what they did the previous week. This would maintain engagement and break up their tasks, while ensuring that the grading is spaced out over a longer period of time.
* Online quiz
  + These can be multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or short answer questions. You can embed them into the presentation of content so that students are frequently checking their comprehension of materials. In most learning management systems, you can automate the feedback and guidance that students receive.
* Website/wiki update
  + A wiki consists of one or more webpages or online documents that can be created or edited by multiple authors. They can be public to the entire Internet or restricted to a select group of people (e.g. students in a shared course, or one section of a course). One well-known example is the wiki encyclopedia, Wikipedia.org. Wikis are a great platform for collectively creating and updating information. You can use wikis in many different ways in your courses. You can even create a wiki for your course that has multiple pages for you, the TAs, and/or students can add: (1) course and assignment FAQs; (2) course glossaries and media libraries; (3) an ongoing archive or current content related to the course, such links, subject resources, or news items; and/or (4) spaces for online study groups or group assignments.
* Video creation
  + Video creation projects can take a variety of different forms including having students create instructional how-to videos, interview segments, story-based videos to illustrate a concept, or short music videos. Implementing a video assignment requires a lot of planning and clear parameters, especially since some students tend to put excessive amounts of energy into creative projects that can interfere with their other classes. You might, for example, specify that the final assignment consist of a short video (5-10 minutes) and suggest that students film only one scene involving a maximum of 4 characters or a short interview. For students who are anxious about working with a new medium of communication, guidelines make the task more manageable. Video creation is an ideal team project where students can share the tasks!
* Learning portfolio
  + An increasingly common assessment tool is a learning portfolio. If you decide to use this, keep in mind that guidelines are helpful. You can ask students to maintain a weekly learning portfolio, where they select a learning activity they did for the class (e.g. a discussion) and reflect on what they learned through engagement in that activity. You can also ask students to post to an online learning portfolio about how they are applying course concepts in their lives outside the classroom.
* Discussions
  + Discussions are a common tool used in online learning environments. As with in-class discussions, providing guidance to students helps to ensure that the discussions are productive and useful learning tools. It helps to give students specific questions to answer in their discussion posts (e.g., Using examples, explain how Freud differentiates between the id, the ego, and the superego.). You might also want to include a requirement for students to respond to one another in the online discussion. For example, you can divide students into four groups (A, B, C, and D). In week one, students from group A post their responses to the discussion question, while students from groups B, C, and D are required to respond to their colleagues’ posts.
* Annotated bibliography
  + You can have the entire class contribute to creating a large, annotated online library of academic articles and/or books that are relevant for your course. Students can be divided up into groups and the groups can take turns contributing their annotated additions to the course library.
* Follow and journal about news or policy issues
  + You can have students maintain weekly posts in the online learning environment where they are monitoring, commenting on, or responding to current policy debates or news events that relate to the course content. They can follow one on-going policy discussion or news story and add to their analysis of it each week as they learn new content.
* Mid-term/final exam
  + You can also use a midterm or final exam method of assessment. You can include a combination of formats, from multiple-choice and true or false, to solving equations, to short answers, to matching, to longer essay-style questions. Keep in mind that the kinds of questions you ask should reflect the stated learning outcomes for the course. You can set up these kinds of tests to take place online or in person.

Appendix C: Creating a Grading Rubric

Grading rubrics are documents which indicate (1) the criteria according to which students’ work is graded and (2) descriptions of various (3 or 4) levels of performance for each criteria. Instructors create these documents and, ideally, provide them to students and teaching assistants before the assignment is due. A rubric is a useful guideline for students, teaching assistants, and instructors. They can be constructed for classes in any discipline and for a variety of different types of assignments.

Why use Grading rubrics

There are many reasons you might want to use a grading rubric. A well-constructed rubric functions as **an instructional tool** which guides students in developing their skills. It does so by clearly indicating what constitutes a beginner level of a skill through to an exemplary level of performance. This allows them to attempt to measure their own work against the criteria before submitting an assignment. A rubric also provides students with **structured** **formative feedback**: it gives them a sense of their strengths and areas for improvement as well as indicating how they can move from one level of performance to another. Rubrics also make the work of **grading** **less tedious** because you do not have to keep writing the same comments over and over as you move from one submission to another. Another useful element of rubrics is that they give multiple evaluators (i.e. TAs) a shared tool to use. This allows for more **consistency** across grading and provides specific suggestions they can give to students about how to improve their work. Finally, for some learners, the **visual** representation of grading with a rubric makes it easier to understand and accept an assigned mark.

How to create a grading rubric

Although rubrics may speed up the amount of time grading takes, they do take some time to prepare. If possible, you might want to spend a little time looking over other rubrics to get a sense of what would or would not work for the particular assignment you have in mind. Once you are ready to start, there are several steps to follow:

* Decide on the 3-6 most important criteria for a particular type of assignment. For example, communication style is a key criteria in an oral presentation.
* Once you have selected the most important criteria, consider the specific elements you would want to include in your description of each level of performance. In the oral presentation example, as you describe the quality of each level of performance for communication style, you might refer to several items: how audible the presenters were, whether they pronounced technical terms correctly, whether they explained all terms, whether they made eye-contact with their audience.
* Decide how many levels of performance you want to include. Ideally, there should be either 3 or 4 levels of performance. Using fewer than three levels means losing specificity and nuance in the descriptions. Yet, using more than four levels makes it difficult to write meaningful descriptors.
* Decide on the weight you want to give to each criteria and each level of performance. For example, a poor performance in a criteria graded out of four might get one mark (or a D) while an exemplary performance might get four marks (or an A).
* Create a table which includes the list of criteria in the left hand column, then add another three or four columns depending on how many levels of performance you have chosen. Across the top of the table, you can label each column with a name (e.g. skill level: beginner, emergent, adequate, exemplary). For each criteria, assign a number and enter a description of the attributes describing each level of skill. In the oral presentation example, you might describe an exemplary level as follows: voice clear and audible, pronounced all technical terms correctly, clearly and correctly defined all terms, consistently made eye contact with audience throughout presentation. You could describe an adequate level as follows: voice mostly clear and audible, pronounced one or two technical terms incorrectly, defined most terms correctly, did not always maintain eye contact.
* Once you have finished filling in the descriptions in each square in the table, you have a rubric!

hints for creating a grading rubric

* Where possible, look at examples. You can ask your colleagues or search for examples on-line. Check out [www.rcampus.com](http://www.rcampus.com) (it includes a searchable database of rubrics and you can get a free membership to use the site to generate your own rubrics).
* Start with the highest level of performance for each criteria. This is usually easiest to describe and provides you a good starting point for being able to imagine a slightly less exemplary performance.
* Keep your rubric as simple as possible – too much detail is overwhelming for you to come up with, your TA to keep in mind, and students to take in.
* Do not go over four levels of performance.
* Make sure your criteria and descriptions are general enough that students can transfer their learning to the next assignment (or one for another class), but narrow enough to provide meaningful feedback.
* Avoid relative terms! In other words, do not describe a level of performance only in relation to another. If one level of performance includes the description “no grammatical errors,” the lower levels should say “few grammatical errors” (not “more grammatical errors”), “some grammatical errors,” and “many grammatical errors.” The idea is to allow each student to understand their own level of performance against the criteria, not how they measure against other students.

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 <http://jolt.merlot.org/vol7no4/linardopoulos_1211.htm>

Appendix D: Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion Posts

**Source:**

Solan, AM, and N Linardopoulos. (2011). Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of a  
 Grading Rubric for Online Discussions. Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, 7(4), 452.  
 Retrieved from http://jolt.merlot.org/vol7no4/linardopoulos\_1211.htm.

**Quantity (25%):**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **100% (25 points)** | **75% (19 points)** | **25% (6 points)** | **0% (0 points)** |
| Student has submitted one substantive original post responding *fully* to the question or topic. Student has submitted at least one substantive reply to a classmate’s post. Total word count for the unit is at least 250 words (at least 5 minutes for audio posts). | Student has submitted one substantive original post responding *fully* to the question or topic. Total word count for the unit is at least 200 words (at least 4 minutes for audio posts). Student does not submit a reply to a classmate’s post. | Student has submitted one substantive reply to a classmate’s post. Total word count for the unit is at least 50 words (at least 1 minute for audio posts). Student does not submit an original post. | No discussion posts are submitted. |

**Quality (25%):**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **100% (25 points)** | **80% (20 points)** | **60% (15 points)** | **0% (0 points)** |
| Student’s original post demonstrates substantial evidence of critical thinking about the topic through, for example, application or creativity. Student’s reply post(s) take the discussion in a new direction. | Student’s original post demonstrates moderate evidence of critical thinking about the topic through, for example, application or creativity. Student’s reply post(s) take the discussion in a new direction. | Student’s original post demonstrates little evidence of critical thinking about the topic through, for example, application or creativity. Student’s reply post(s) take the discussion in a new direction. | Student’s original post demonstrates no evidence of critical thinking (for example, just stating opinion without justification). Student’s reply post(s) merely agree with the classmate or merely repeat what the classmate said. |

**Timeliness (25%):**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **100% (25 pts)** | **90% (22.5 pts)** | **75% (19 pts)** | **60% (15 pts)** | **50% (12.5 pts)** | **40% (10 pts)** |
| Student has submitted one original post by Sunday and has submitted one response post by Monday. | Student has submitted one original post by Sunday and has submitted one response post by Tuesday. | Student has submitted one original post by Monday and has submitted one response post by Tuesday. | Student has submitted one original post by Tuesday and has submitted one response post by Tuesday. | Student submits an original post by Tuesday, but does not submit a response post. | Student submits posts after the unit ends and within one week of the original unit’s closing date. |

**Communication Proficiency (25%):**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **100% (25 points)** | **90% (22.5 points)** | **50% (12.5 points)** | **0% (0 points)** |
| Written posts : Student has submitted posts with no spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, citation, or other writing errors.  Audio posts : Student has submitted posts with no grammar errors. The posts are enunciated professionally. | Written posts : Student has submitted posts with one to five spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, citation, or other writing errors.  Audio posts : student has submitted posts with one to five grammar or enunciation errors. | Written posts : Student has submitted posts with six to nine spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, citation, or other writing errors.  Audio posts : student has submitted posts with six to nine grammar or enunciation errors. | Written posts : Student has submitted posts with 10 or more spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, citation, or other writing errors.  Audio posts : student has submitted posts with 10 or more grammar or enunciation errors. |