Moving Exam Content Online

In traditional, face-to-face learning environments, instructors typically assess student learning through formative check-in activities and exams. These activities help measure student and instructor performance in a course and often comprise a substantial portion of a student's grade. How can you go about replicating these activities and assessing students in online formats? Below are strategies and tips to consider, especially if you are forced to move your course activities online during times of disruption.

Convert Your Existing Exams Using the Blackboard Test Tool

Blackboard offers several exam format options, plus the ability to time an exam, randomize questions, and import a question bank. Student exam scores are integrated with the Grade Center [link] to ease your grading burden and provide a central location for students to view their grades, through the My Grades tool. Blackboard has several videos on using the test tool on their website. [link] It's important to note that SLU does not have an option for proctoring online exams. If you are concerned with academic integrity, using some of the Blackboard options such as randomizing questions and preventing students from backtracking might help. You can also set the exam so students must take the exam the first time they open it. Otherwise a student could open the exam, look at the questions, and then look up answers before going back in to actually take the exam. You might consider holding feedback and correct answers for the exam until the deadline to take it has passed. However, these options can also add stress to students who are already under stress about a variety of things during an emergency situation. It might be a better solution to have the class self police by working together to create an honor code for exams.

Alternatives to Exams

If you have ever thought about moving away from exams to different methods of assessment, this might be a good time to experiment. Think of this as assessment through content creation. Authentic assessment is a term defined by Jon Muller as "A form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills." You can learn more in Mueller's Authentic Assessment Toolbox. [link] A starting place for authentic assessment would be to look at your learning outcomes and think about what students could produce or demonstrate to you as to document that they have achieved the outcome.

Here are some ideas.

- Turn an exam into a research paper or project.
- Have students record a video presentation over a chapter the exam would cover.

- If you can manage it in your class size, schedule one on one web meetings with your students through Zoom or another tool. Assess their knowledge orally by having them discuss concepts with you.
- Develop a case study where students apply their knowledge, or ask them to develop a case study.
- Ask students to lead a discussion on a chapter or concept, including developing questions or an activity for their classmates.
- Use metacognitive activities such as a journal in which students discuss what they're learning and how they will use it.

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center by [email](mailto:).