TOPkit DIGEST

This monthÕs TOPkit Digest is brought to you by **Carla M. Nevarez**, MBA, MSET, Assistant Instructional Designer (Carla.Nevarez@ucf.edu) and **Florence Williams**, PhD., Associate Instructional Designer (Florence.Williams@ucf.edu). Both are from the Center for Distributed Learning at the University of Central Florida. They discuss the topic of **Guiding Faculty to Think About Online Assessments**.

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Video Tip

The Purpose of Assessment

Using Assessment to Evaluate Programs and Processes

In this video, Frank Avella, Associate Career Technical Education (CTE) trainer and project coordinator from the Teachings in Education YouTube channel, explains the purpose of assessment and the reason for using it to identify the strengths of course design and areas for improvement. Avella identifies the reason for using different types of assessment and how assessment ties into program evaluation. In higher education practitioners must review the key factors for assessment as they implement the process for design and delivery.

Watch Video

Top Tips

Creating Effective Online Assessments

Five Essential Tips for Designing Effective Online Assessments

Assessments have a significant role in online education, providing students with opportunities to show their learning. They are valuable to help instructors with feedback to adjust their course or course materials. However, creating effective online assessments requires thoughtful planning and consideration. In this newsletter, we will provide tips related to assessment design to guide faculty in thinking about online assessments.

Tip #1: Aligning Assessments with Learning Objectives. One of the important aspects of designing effective assessments is to align them with course objectives. Assessments should measure the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning outcomes. Therefore, before designing assessments, instructional designers should carefully review the course objectives and identify the key concepts, skills, and knowledge that students should learn from the content. Consider reviewing Aligning Outcomes, Assessments, and Instruction for more details on this concept.

Tip #2: Choosing the Right Assessment Type. Today's Learning Management Systems (LMS) offer several types of assessment methods that can be used to evaluate student learning, such as quizzes, exams, essays, discussion boards, and group projects. To ensure that students are engaged and motivated, course designers should consider using a variety of assessment methods that aligns with the course objectives and offer opportunities for students to interact with the content in various ways. Some assessment tools will align better with the content and may work well depending on the course discipline and content structure. The assessment period helps decide if the assessment used is diagnostic, formative, or summative. The learning benchmarks should also be considered when selecting an assessment solution. In this way, the assessment will align with the content and objectives and help determine how well students understand and can implement principles from the content.

Tip #3: Providing Clear Instructions and Expectations. Effective online assessments require clear communication of expectations and guidelines, which can be achieved through collaboration between the subject matter expert and the designer. To ensure successful assessments, it is essential to provide detailed instructions that cover how to complete and submit the assessment, as well as specific requirements like word limits or file formats. Additionally, the instructions should clearly communicate the expectations for a quality submission and how the assessment will be evaluated. To facilitate understanding, effective communication techniques such as bullet points, numbered lists, examples, or templates can be used. Rubrics can also serve as a useful resource for students to monitor their preparation as they complete assignments.

Tip #4: Taking Accessibility into Consideration. When designing online assessments keep accessibility in mind. Accessibility means that assessments are designed to be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. Consider using tools that provide secure testing environments and allow for accommodations for students with disabilities. When using videos, make them accessible by adding captions. Try to avoid other elements like hotspots as they are not accessible for the visually impaired.

Tip #5: Promoting Academic Integrity. Academic integrity is essential for online assessments. Academic dishonesty can take many forms, including plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized collaboration. To prevent academic dishonesty, instructional designers can suggest a variety of strategies, such as setting clear expectations for academic integrity, using anti-plagiarism software, and designing authentic assessments that make cheating difficult. A proven assessment design principle is to create items that promote critical thinking and deep learning, rather than just testing recall. Assessments that require students to apply what they have learned to real-world situations or to demonstrate their understanding in creative ways are less likely to be susceptible to academic dishonesty.

Conclusion

Assessments are an integral part of any instructional design, and online assessments have become increasingly important in the digital age. As instructional designers and learning and development practitioners, we ensure that online assessments are not only effective, but also accessible, secure, and engaging.

In this article, we have shared five tips that can help instructional designers guide faculty in designing

effective online assessments. By aligning assessments with course objectives, using a variety of assessment methods, providing clear instructions and expectations, considering accessibility, and evaluating and academic integrity, you can create online assessments that meet the needs of both faculty and students.

These tips are a starting point for designing effective online assessments. Faculty support professionals must continually review and update their assessment strategies to meet the changing needs of the students and the subject matter. By adopting a flexible and iterative approach to online assessment design, practitioners can ensure that assessments are effective, engaging, and accessible to all.

From the Community

Rubrics for All Modalities

Best Practices for Choosing the Right Rubric for Assessment

Rubrics are foundational to instructional design because whatever form they take; they all work to assess the learner's competency in relation to pre-established course objectives or learning objectives. Practitioners can benefit from reviewing and implementing perspectives shared by TOPkit community contributor Sue Bauer's evaluation checklists and rubrics article. In Rubrics for Modalities, TOPkit Digest contributor Susan Jardaneh shares several insights about the usefulness of rubrics for online learning.

Would you like to **share your expertise** with the TOPkit community as a TOPkit Digest contributor? Reach out to us with your topic idea at TOPkit@ucf.edu.

Top Community Topics

- Evaluating - Checklists & Rubrics
- Developing - Best Practices for Using Video in Online Learning
- Developing - Sample Course
- Planning - Faculty Development Decision Guide
- Ask ADDIE
- Evaluating - Getting Published in the Field of Instructional Design and Technology and Faculty Development

Works Referenced or Cited

SEE REFERENCES

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