TIPS on Assessing Students Online [1]

Task design

1. Provide options

o Based on their 2019-20 experience, some HKU colleagues reported that their students became more creative in assignments when they had options. For example, when students have difficulty in accessing library resources *(e.g. the closure of the libraries, lack of e-books they are supposed to read),* it might be a good idea to allow students to choose materials they prefer or have access to (*e.g. books, internet resources, articles, data, social network, etc.).* Another example, is allowing options in assignment modality (written, multimedia etc.) and format *(e.g. zoom viva).*

o HKU colleagues reported that students were less motivated to collaborate online either due to a lack of skills in managing this new format or practical difficulties in coordinating teams across different locations and time zones. Some teachers found students were more motivated to perform at their best when given the choice (at the outset) to undertake a project/assignment individually or in groups.

o CAVEAT: While offering options for the students, it is also important to ensure all options are measured consistently so that all students have an equitable assessment experience and results.

2. Approximate students' experiences in authentic assessment as closely as possible to the original design by focusing on the key features of authentic assessment

o Utilize authentic information/ sources from previous cohorts (e.g. real lab data, real cases) or provide access to live experiences through the internet (e.g. online interviews with people, online observations, virtual tours, live broadcasts of visits) to connect the knowledge students learnt with real life.

o Have students use what they learned to solve a problem or meet a need in the real world in the online environment (e.g. conduct teaching practicum online with partner schools, help companies move their business online, provide solutions to community partners at a long distance, etc.).

o Encourage students to apply their knowledge in an analytical and reflective way on online platforms (e.g. produce reflective e-journals/portfolios, develop websites, etc).

3. Invite students to submit their 'best-takes'

This means allowing students to submit a version of their assignment *(e.g. presentation)* that they are most satisfied with. This may help remove the pressure on students caused by the quality of internet service or access to the mobile devices. Allow students to submit their "best-takes" if an assessment means to measure how well students understand the information/can apply the knowledge. However, do include the time factor and ask students to perform the task in front of the camera if it is important to test whether students can complete an assessment task efficiently on time.

4. Avoid setting a submission deadline at midnight or on a weekend

Students who have technical problems in submitting assignments at midnight or on a weekend may have limited/no access to support, which may lead to student angst and problems for teachers with regards to late submission policies/ guidelines.

Student preparation

5. Involve students in the decision-making for assessment

Discuss with students the arrangement on assessment at the beginning of a course so that you can identify the challenges to students early on and make adjustment immediately. Involving students in decisions-making usually increases their sense of ownership over their own learning journeys and motivate them to do their best in the assessment.

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[1] Most of the tips are extracted from Zeng, L M. (2020). *The diverse assessment experience across faculties during lockdown in 2020 at The University of Hong Kong*. A report for the VP and PVC (Teaching and Learning) Office, The University of Hong Kong.

6. **Spend time familiarizing students with the e-platforms/tools to be used for assessment**

   Allow students some time to practice using the e-platform/tools (e.g. arranging some in-class activities using these e-platform/tools, having a mock assessment, etc) in order to iron out potential technical problems they may encounter during assessment.