Online Assessment
Research-Based Practices & Tutorials

1. **Align assessments to learning objectives**
   Assessments should reveal whether students have achieved the learning set forth in the objectives. Alignment between learning objectives and assessments ensures students are not under or over challenged. Furthermore, the nature of the assessment should support the measurable verb set in the learning objective. (For example, "analyze" suggests written assessment while "select" suggests multiple choice.)

2. **Provide clear and concise assessment descriptions**
   When writing assessment descriptions, identify and communicate what students should accomplish. Be thorough so there is little room for interpretation. Additionally, describe the conditions of the assignment including (but not limited to) time constraints, question type, length of expected response, and due date.

3. **Establish specific evaluation criteria**
   Learner and teacher expectations are better met when evaluation criteria are provided at the time a task is assigned (Conrad & Donaldson, 2011, p. 30). Evaluation criteria may be in the form of a detailed checklist, rubric, or other evaluation tool. If you assign a quiz or exam, be sure to clearly state point values for each question and provide information about partial credit.

4. **Make exemplars available**
   Exemplars are defined as "carefully chosen samples of student work which are used to illustrate dimensions of quality and clarify assessment expectations" (Carless & Chan, 2016, p. 930). If you're open to sharing them, Newlyn (2017) found that exemplars positively impact student achievement because students were able to conceptualize the assessment and achieve clarity on assessment directions. To protect previous student information, be sure to scrub exemplars of all identifying factors or gain previous student permission.

5. **Deliver robust feedback**
   Learners improve when they know what they have done well, along with what skills could use improvement. Provide feedback that is specific, constructive, balanced, and timely (Leibold et al., 2015).

6. **Use a variety of assessment types**
   Multiple data points ensure a more accurate analysis of student learning. Varied assessments promote student interest and engagement (Sato & Haegele, 2018). Variety should include collaborative assessments to help students learn through socially constructed understandings and reflective assessments to help students enhance their self-regulation (Boishwarelo et al., 2017).

7. **Scaffold assessments**
   To build student confidence via early successes, offer frequent low stakes assessments early in a course to prepare them for more complex, higher stakes assessments later in a course (Darby & Lang, 2019).

8. **Incorporate student choice**
   Consider allowing students opportunities to choose the methods by which they demonstrate content mastery and understanding. "Offering learners choices can develop self-determination, pride in accomplishment, and increase the degree to which they feel connected to their learning" (CAST, 2018).

References

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