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Getting started with **digital assessments and examinations for teaching staff**

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Good assessments and examinations are not only a matter of how they are designed (ASSESSMENT DESIGN). Students must also understand clearly what is expected of them (ASSESSMENT LITERACY) and learn to estimate their own abilities more accurately (ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK). Digital scenarios provide significant challenges in these three areas, but at the same time they also offer new opportunities for advances in assessment and instruction.

These ten tips will help you recognize and address the most significant challenges, and take advantage of the opportunities of digital formats.

ASSESSMENT LITERACY

Clarify expectations and assessment requirements with students at an early stage

1

Communicate expectations clearly to students

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A wide range of digital assessment formats are available; for example, a multiple choice exam with EvaExam, a forum or submitting a video on ADAM.

✓ Be sure that everyone understands the new assessment formats.

✓ Clearly communicated expectations and requirements are a necessary prerequisite (a) for a fair assessment and (b) in order for students to orient themselves to these requirements when studying.

2

Facilitate digital interaction

If your course does not take place in person, students will miss a lot of opportunities for informal interaction with their fellow students. This is relevant to exam preparation and especially for students who are at the beginning of their studies or who don't have many opportunities to discuss their studies with friends, acquaintances or family members.

✓ Make sure that no one is excluded from informal interaction.

✓ Organize meetings or platforms (digital whiteboard, Zoom meetings, etc.) facilitated by more advanced students or tutors for informal digital interaction about specific topics.

ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

Use the available digital channels to give your students feedback

3

Use mock exams

ADAM and EvaExam offer you the opportunity to build practice exercises, tests and assessment simulations into your course. This helps your students to better evaluate their progress and selfdirect their studies. Here are some ideas:

On ADAM

✓ You can build in automatic feedback to test answers or use the exercise module to make the solutions visible to all students after the submission deadline.

With EvaExam

✓ You can create an online exercise to check learning progress in which participants are immediately told whether their answers are right or wrong.

✓ Or you can run a live online quiz during a course meeting; for example, students can participate by scanning a QR code with their mobile device.

✓ Both options can be conducted anonymously or non-anonymously.

(4)

Students should know where they stand
after the assessment

After the assessment, students should know where they stand. This point is essential to the development of students' future learning processes.

✓ Use your evaluation criteria for the assessment as a basis for your feedback to students as well.

✓ Make your evaluation rubric or a checklist available to students online, so they can see clearly where they stand and what their next learning steps should be.

✓ Another possibility is to create and upload short feedback videos (3–5 mins.) to ADAM in which you show students the submitted assessments and comment on them. This kind of video feedback is much less time-consuming than providing written feedback, and students appreciate the personalized nature of it.

ASSESSMENT DESIGN

Use the available digital formats to make exams and assessments

5

Take advantage of opportunities for collaborative learning

Collaborative assessments and learning formats help students to acquire important skills for their future professional life.

✓ Incorporate wikis, blogs, online forum discussions, moderation or other forms of digital group work in your instruction as a form of assessment. This will allow students to practice a variety of digital roles that will be relevant in their future careers.

6

Develop practice-oriented tasks

Digital assessments and examinations offer you the opportunity to develop practice-oriented tasks for your students. Practice-oriented tasks not only have a positive influence on student motivation, but also play a central role in their future.

✓ Give your students the opportunity during
their studies to actively engage in specific
tasks that are relevant to the course and
of interdisciplinary importance, and which
will also play a role in their future career.

(7)

Offer open-book and take-home examinations

Open-book examinations (written examinations in which the use of resources is explicitly permitted) offer students the opportunity to demonstrate certain skills that may not be so evident in other examination formats.

Do your students all have to take the examination on campus at the same time, or can they decide for themselves where and when they would like to take the exam within the permitted time frame? Take-home exams allow interesting new variations; for example, a "24-hour examination" in which students receive one or more assigned tasks that they have to complete within one day. This may involve analyzing a case or problem, comparing a variety of provided solutions, etc.

✓ You can find open-book and take-home exam options on ADAM in the "exercise" or "online portfolio" modules.

✓ Take note that the focus of questions in an open-book examination should be less on the reproduction of knowledge, since this can probably be easily found in the resources available during the exam. Instead, more cognitively demanding tasks should be emphasized; for example, literature review, contextualization, critical reflection, comparison, evaluation, etc.

✓ If you are planning a take-home examination, you can both assign and collect the exam digitally (e. g. via email or upload to ADAM).

✓ Plan the scope and complexity of the tasks to fit the prescribed timeframe.

✓ Ensure you can be reached: let students know how they can clarify questions and problems that arise during the examination window with you.

8

Test the examination duration
and adjust the workload

If you conduct assessments and examinations digitally, the duration of the exam will probably need to be extended.

✓ Allow more time to complete the exam tasks than for a non-digital exam, and whenever possible test the duration with an exam simulation.

✓ Keep students' workload in mind.

✓ Gather feedback from your students from time to time to ensure that their actual workload corresponds with your planning. Changes may be necessary.

9

Prepare students for the digital examination

It may be the case that not all your students are familiar (enough) with the digital examination format to be able to clearly envision the procedure and adequately manage the technical testing environment.

✓ Ensure that students familiarize themselves with the testing software and test the infrastructure in advance. If possible, conduct an exam simulation. This will contribute to the fairness of your examination.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For further development of your digital assessments and examinations, take advantage of these University of Basel resources

10

One last tip: Assistance with evaluating your assessment

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How do students perceive the difficulty of your examinations? If you would like to know, you can have your digital and non-digital assessments evaluated by your students.

The Team Educational Development of the University of Basel can provide support and help you develop an appropriate survey. We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to further develop your assessments and exams, and make them more professional.

You can find courses and other materials on the topic of digital teaching and assessments and examination in the Knowlege Hub of the team Educational Development (accessible for staff on the university network or via VPN).

Would you like additional support with the didactic design of your assessments and examinations? Feel free to contact the Team Educational Development.