

10 Tips to Refine Your Course Assessments

1. Make sure you measure each of your learning outcomes with at least one assignment, activity, quiz or exam.
2. Check student progress throughout the semester with low-stakes formative assessments. Regular, low-stakes assessments let you and the student know how they are doing during your course, not just after it's too late to make a change.
3. The best summative assessments are cumulative and require students to recall and retrieve important information, at different times, in multiple ways.
4. Be transparent. Let students know how, when and why they are being assessed.
5. Provide clear instructions for every assignment, activity and exam question, along with the resources needed for students to be successful.
6. Use a combination of assessment types to meet the needs of diverse learners. Provide multiple ways for students to show their learning.
7. Complete the assessment yourself. If you can't do it, they won't be able to either.
8. For assignments and essay-type questions, rubrics are an essential tool to ensure fairness, objectivity and consistency in your grading.
9. Using multiple choice questions doesn't mean you can't test higher order thinking.
10. Keep in mind when you design your assessments that you are measuring a student's knowledge, not their test-taking skills.