

# Managing Assessments

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Welcome back. In this presentation, we'll discuss strategies for managing your assessments.

## Objectives

- ▶ Match your course objectives with appropriate assessments (1<sup>st</sup> presentation)
- ▶ Determine the most suitable assessment methods for specific challenges
  - Common methods of online assessment
  - Manageable with existing resources
  - Support academic integrity (3<sup>rd</sup> presentation)

In the first presentation, we talked about matching your course objectives with appropriate assessments and mentioned some of the challenges involved with assessment. Let's consider some ways to meet those challenges.

# Manpower



- ▶ Consider multiple smaller papers or projects
- ▶ Use Rubrics
- ▶ Give TAs clear instructions
- ▶ Provide format

Final Project Grading		
CRITERIA	SCALES	
	Excellent	Good
<b>Theme explain</b> Theme and theme explanation	10.00 Theme makes sense and explanation is easy to understand.	8.00 Theme makes sense but explanation could be better.
<b>Theme support</b> Works support the theme	10.00 The works fit together to support the theme.	8.00 Most of the works support the theme.
<b>Artist info</b> Artist information (if available)	10.00 Each work includes artist information.	8.00 Artist information could be more extensive.
<b>Events</b>	10.00	8.00

Make the most of the manpower you have available for grading. If you would like to require papers or projects, consider having multiple smaller papers rather than one large one. That way, you can spread your grading time over the semester. This approach allows students to get feedback throughout the course rather than just after a large assignment. This may not work in some cases.

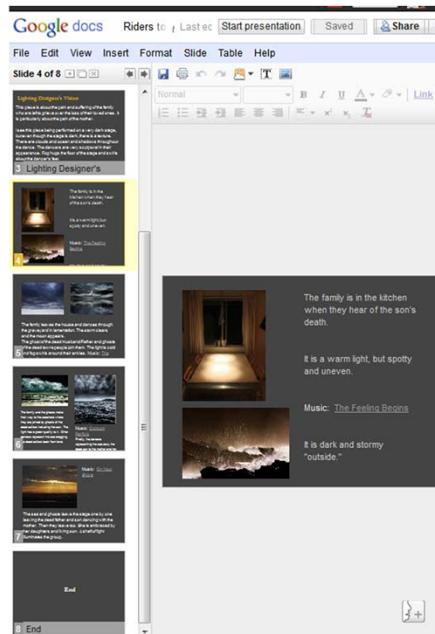
Use rubrics to help make your grading more efficient. This can also help you to keep your grading consistent across sections and between TAs. The GradeMark tool in Turnitin provides some useful features for rubric grading.

Make certain that any TAs have clear instructions. A rubric can help a great deal with this.

If you have assigned a project or a paper, give students a format or outline to follow so that their work follows a logical order. This will help by making it easier to find the elements that you are looking for.

# Technology

- ▶ Introduce new tools gradually
- ▶ Test technology prior to semester start
- ▶ Clear instructions with tutorials (tested by non-subject matter expert)



It is a good idea to introduce any new tools gradually. You'll save yourself from having to respond to e-mails from hoards of frustrated students if you provide some low-stakes assignments that will familiarize students with the tool features and requirements.

This probably goes without saying, but it is critical that you test the technology prior to the start of the semester. Ask a TA, or even give some undergraduate students some extra credit to help you do some tool tests.

Provide instructions on how to use the tool. Many webtools have video tutorials already made so you just need to link to them. It would be a good idea to provide your students with a step-by-step procedure as to what YOU want them to do. You can do this with Camtasia Relay or Jing. We'll talk more about these screen recording tools later in this workshop.

# Technology Resources

- ▶ Campus & College resources
- ▶ Teach.ufl.edu
- ▶ Distance Learning course fee
- ▶ Lead time

The screenshot shows the homepage of the UF Assistance for Teaching website. At the top, there's a banner with a photo of people at a workshop and the text "Library Workshops: Learn how to navigate through the digital publishing process and how to connect with other researchers." A red arrow points from this banner down to the "Unit Support" sidebar. The sidebar contains two sections: "Course Assistance" (with links to Course Assistance Request Form, Program Assistance Request Form, and Request ADA Course Assistance) and "Unit Support" (with links to various college and center websites). The footer of the page includes the UF Information Technology logo and the URL www.it.ufl.edu.

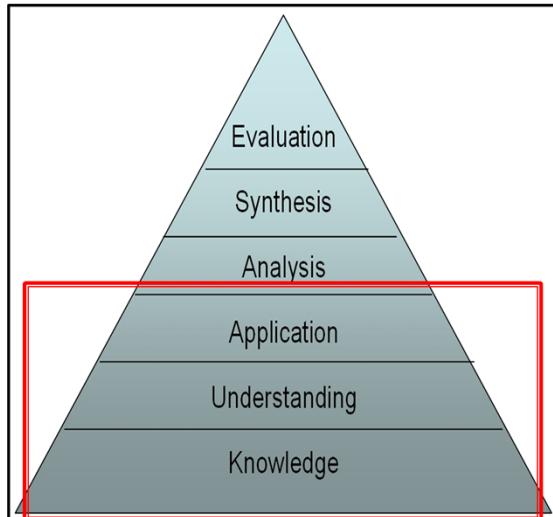
Be sure to take advantage of the technology resources available to you through your department, college or campus-wide support services. If you're not sure what is available, visit the teach.ufl.edu website. Centrally supported services and resources are listed on the main areas of the site. Unit technology resources are listed at the bottom of the homepage.

If you are interested in using a technology that has a cost, you might want to request a distance learning fee to pay for it. This fee is available for distance courses—those are courses with 80% or higher of the course material and activity online. You need to request such a fee through your college and department.

If you do request assistance or a course fee, be sure that you allow sufficient lead time. You may need as much as a semester of lead time, depending upon your needs.

## Best Practices: Quizzes

- ▶ Assess lower level learning
- ▶ Automatic grading
- ▶ Good for large courses
- ▶ Encourage students to do readings and watch lectures



Quizzes are a good way to keep students moving through the course material. Keep the point value fairly low. They can be graded automatically by the computer which makes them a good choice for large enrollment courses.

## Best Practices: Discussions

- ▶ Assess higher level learning
- ▶ Use groups
- ▶ Provide grading guidelines or rubric
- ▶ Consider peer review

	Not acceptable	Meets Expectations
<b>Format and Grammar</b>	(6 points) Post is difficult to follow and grammar is poor	(8 points) Post is easy to understand, grammar is correct
<b>Critical Analysis</b>	(6 points) Statement does not present a new "take" on the topic	(8 points) Statement represents a new interpretation of the topic
<b>Supporting Research</b>	(6 points) The research link provided does not support your argument	(8 points) The research link provided supports your argument
<b>Thoughtful Response</b>	(12 points) Your response to another post does not add anything to the conversation	(16 points) Your response to another post adds to the conversation

The discussion tool in your course management system is a handy tool. It can be used to assess all levels of learning. It can be an effective way of providing students with opportunities to engage with each other and the course material.

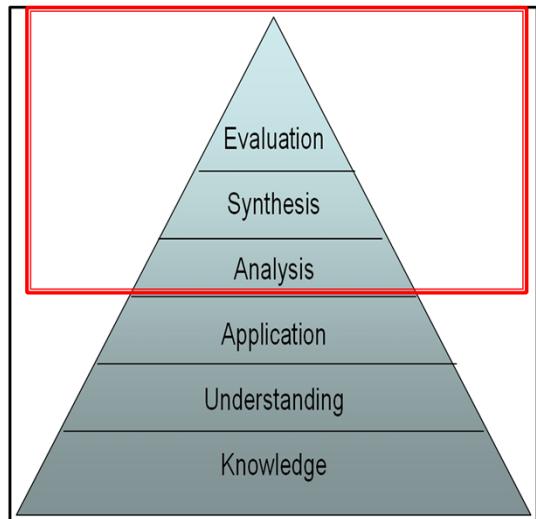
Just as with a face-to-face class, discussion tend to work better with smaller groups. Between 5 and 15 students will work best.

For the best results, provide the students with a grading rubric. An example of an ideal post is helpful as well.

Consider opportunities for peer review. When given a rubric, students can give each other helpful feedback. Keep in mind, that such an activity needs to be incorporated into the overall assignment, not added as an afterthought.

## Best Practices: Projects

- ▶ Assess higher level learning
- ▶ Clear instructions
- ▶ Use a rubric
- ▶ Consider groups
- ▶ Use interim deadlines
- ▶ Introduce new technology prior to the start of project
- ▶ Consider peer review



Projects can be an excellent way for students to engage with course material at a high level of learning. Something that tends to be forgotten in online courses is that the online instructions must be very clear and detailed. When working on a large project, students can quickly become frustrated and you'll be bombarded with questions if something is not clear.

It is a very good idea to use a rubric for the project. Make sure that the students have access to this in advance. Again, this will save you a lot of time in answering student questions about what you are looking for.

I know that students hate them, and faculty aren't fond of them either, but a well-designed group project has multiple benefits. First of all, students gain experience working as part of a team. In many disciplines, this is a valuable skill. Secondly, it can help cut down on overall grading time, since you only have to grade one project for several students. We'll talk more about how to take the pain out of group projects later in the Faculty Institute.

Interim deadlines can help you even out the project grading over the semester, it can also provide students with feedback midway through the project timeline. Interim deadlines cut down on the number of students who wait until the last minute to do the whole project. And keep in mind, that feedback does not necessarily need to come from the instructor or TAs, having students review each other's work pushes them into the highest levels of learning. You'll also find that seeing what other students have done tends to push students to revise their own work to make it better.

## Rubrics



- ▶ Check support materials
- ▶ Reduce question e-mails
- ▶ Save grading time
- ▶ Assist TAs with grading
- ▶ Provide consistency

When faculty ask me what is the one thing they can do with their course to make it easier to teach and better for students, my answer is to use rubrics for grading. We have mentioned this tool a number of times throughout these presentations and it is such a useful tool, that it is worth spending a bit more time on it.

When you set up a rubric for an assignment, use it to make certain that you are providing all of the materials and information students need to meet each of the criteria.

You know that students want to know what they need to do to get an “A.” By laying it out clearly in a rubric, you’ll answer this question for them before they bombard you with e-mails about it.

You can really speed up your grading time by setting up your rubric in a spreadsheet or word document. Check off each item and add the appropriate comments. Then you can upload the document for each student to the assignment tool. If you use Turnitin, then students simply log into Turnitin to see their feedback.

The rubric can help your TAs do the grading for you. With everyone using the same rubric, you can get better consistency among TAs and across multiple sections.

## Rubrics

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Organization	Essay is clear and easy to follow (5 pts.)	It is not always easy to follow the essay organization (3pts.)	Essay is disjointed and difficult to follow (1 pt.)
Grammar	There are 0 spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors (5 pts.)	There are 1 – 3 spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors (3 pts.)	There are more than 3 spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors (0 pts.)
Originality	Essay suggests a new approach to the topic (5 pts.)		Essay does not suggest a new approach to the topic (1 pt.)

Comments:

A rubric can be as simple or as complicated as you like. This is a fairly simple rubric for a 15 point essay assignment. Using this, the student can see that he or she will lose 5 points if there are more than 3 spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors. The student can also see that originality is a critical element of the assignment—as it is worth one third of the points.

We have provided a rubric form for you in this workshop. The link for it appears below the link for this presentation.

## Rubric Resources

- ▶ [Rubistar.4teachers.org](http://Rubistar.4teachers.org)
- ▶ [Turnitin.com \(GradeMark\)](http://Turnitin.com)
  - [Lss.at.ufl.edu/teachingtools/](http://Lss.at.ufl.edu/teachingtools/)



Sometimes it's helpful if you don't start from scratch to create your rubric. Rubistar is a webtool that allows you to search through rubrics that other teachers have made and edit them to suit the needs of your assignment. It will also help you to create your own rubric from scratch.

As I mentioned in an earlier presentation, the turnitin tool supports rubrics. In order to use it, you need to use a standalone account. All UF faculty have access to this service. Request your account by going to the LSS services page.

## UF Standards and Markers of Excellence

- ▶ Feedback about student performance is provided in a timely manner throughout the course as stated in the syllabus.
- ▶ Assessments are given in an appropriate time period after learning activities have taken place

The UF Standards and Markers of Excellence recommend that you give students feedback on how they are doing throughout the semester. If you don't let students know what they are doing poorly, then they can't improve.

Schedule assessments so that there is a reasonable time frame between the instruction and the assessment.

## Best Practices

- ▶ Give students clear information on how they will be assessed
- ▶ Use multiple assessment methods to address varied learning preferences
- ▶ Assess frequently
- ▶ Return feedback as quickly as possible

Who hasn't heard this question: "Will this be on test?" It is a good idea to provide students with clear information on how they will be assessed. Not only will this help students prepare, but it will reduce the number of questions that you have answer.

Provide different types of assessments to get the best picture of how well your students are learning the material. Provide students with multiple opportunities to show that they have reached the objectives.

Return feedback to the students as quickly as you can. It's a good idea to let students know when they can expect to receive feedback—particularly if you have a large enrollment course and a lot of grading to do.

## After the Assessment

- ▶ If many students did not successfully meet the objectives, re-evaluate:
  - The **objective**: to assure assessibility and accurateness
  - The **assessment**: to assure validity in measuring the objective
  - The **content**: to assure that adequate instruction was provided

Remember that an assessment is a tool—use it not only to check student progress, but the success of your course material. If many students did poorly, you should review your objective, to make sure that it can be measured and is accurate.

Review your assessment, to make certain that it accurately measures the objective, and finally check your course material to make certain that the students had all of the building blocks they needed to succeed.

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