Assessment in the Online Classroom

By Scott Vigallon
Instructional Technology/
Open Learning Coordinator

Las Positas College

Copyright Scott Vigallon, Las Positas College
It’s your choice

- Choose the traditional format (quizzes, essays, etc.), alternative format (performance-based), or both
- Either way, be sure to:
  - Match the assessment to your student learning outcomes and/or objectives
  - Inform students of rules, procedures, criteria, etc.
  - Give students proper, and prompt, feedback
  - Prepare for student excuses
Prepare for excuses

- Some excuses might be legitimate, some might not
- Most common: “a technical problem kept me from finishing the exam”
- No way for you to know for sure, so have a policy in place
Exam policy

- Some possibilities:
  - No makeups
  - If granted a makeup, have to complete entire exam from beginning
  - Have to come to campus to complete the makeup
  - If exceed the time limit, 1-point deduction for each minute late
Traditional formats

- Multiple choice
- True-false
- Short answer
- Matching
- Essay
- Etc.
Traditional formats: Design tips

- Design lengthy exams so students see questions one at a time
- If presenting all questions on one screen, divide lengthy exams into multiple smaller exams
  - Tell students to save after each answer
Alternative formats

- Performance-based assessment
  - Web sites
  - PowerPoint presentations
  - Video demonstrations
  - Case studies
  - Portfolios
- Also: open-book tests, self-tests, research assignments, etc.
- These formats tend to minimize cheating
And speaking of cheating. . .

Here are some ways to minimize cheating:

- Collect a writing sample(s)
- Write creative essay questions
  - Ask students to apply what they have learned
  - Require higher-order thinking along with supporting factual knowledge
  - Examples: state & defend a position, role-play a certain perspective
- Record chats for reference
Minimizing cheating

- Call students to discuss a point further after an exam
- Have proctored exams
- Use an anti-plagiarism service
- Set time limits on tests, prohibit backtracking, force completion, don’t show results upon submission
  - Tell students up front your policy if they have technical problems
- Randomize quiz questions and answers
After the assessment

- Use results to:
  - determine how valid and reliable your assessment was
  - determine if your students met the student learning outcome and/or objective
  - improve the assessment for the future

- If you assess via quizzes, use the Blackboard statistical tools