Principle 11:
Using technologies to support assessment

What the principle means

Using technologies to support, record and mange assessment is something universities have been doing for some time, but the Covid19 pandemic has significantly raised the game in many universities with the move away from campus-based assessment. Benefits many HEIs have experienced have included some time and resource-efficiencies and a marked improved effectiveness of outcomes, where students can benefit from more flexible approaches.

Questions to consider with your course team and students

- Have you explored ways in which diverse technologies might be useful to you in delivering and managing assessment and feedback (Farrell et al. 2021)?
- Where you use computer-supported assignments, how do you ensure that they are useful at assessing students and differentiating between them?
- If you use MCQs, who sets them? How do you pilot them? Who writes the distractors? Do students do them all sitting in a PC room at the same time? What do you do about people who miss the test and/or need reasonable adjustments? Do you give them any feedback? Do you ask students to do calculations in the tests or otherwise use information, rather than just repeat it?

Setting goals for assessment and feedback enhancement

Having reviewed and discussed Principle 11, as a team can you identify areas that you know to be priorities for enhancing your programme assessment and feedback strategy in the coming three years? All areas are important, but selecting too many can make genuine actionable proposals unachievable which is demoralising. Concentrate on what is feasible.

Once you have agreed on the priorities, you may wish to use the table overleaf to record your plans for enhancement under Principle 11.

Principle 11 worksheet - Using technologies to support assessment

| Principle focus	Specific actions you will take:	Responsible leader:	Help/resources needed to make this happen:	Milestones (timescale for implementation):	Performance indicators:
e.g. Revisiting using technology to support assessment	e.g. Consultation with staff and students about recent experience of using technology to support assessment	e.g. Dr Jolanta O'Neill	e.g. Time to work as a department team and with students.	e.g. One academic year	e.g. • Records of discussions • Shared findings of learning captured in the discussion. • Articulation of staff and students aspirations re using technology to support assessment.

About this resource

This resource is drawn from the *Principles-based Toolkit for Effective Assessment Design* (Brown and Sambell). This resource focuses on 'Principle 11– Using technologies to support assessment'. The resource can be used by teams who wish to review how this principle is enacted in their work, and who wish to plan to enhance their practice regarding this principle. The resource can used as a stand-alone thinking and planning tool for teams, as well as being considered in the context of the toolkit as a whole.

As part of the Maynooth University 'Assess for Success' project, Professor Sally Brown and Professor Kay Sambell designed a toolkit for effective assessment design. This toolkit has been designed to provide course teams at Maynooth University with guidance on periodical review of their assessment and feedback practices, in support of student success. The toolkit involves twelve principles which were proposed by Brown and Sambell, and shaped and modified by the Maynooth University 'Assess for Success' Advisory Group. The toolkit is available at in the Maynooth University Assess for Success Hub.

The principles and the toolkit taken as a whole set a substantial agenda for action, but Brown and Sambell stress that the toolkit can primarily help local teams to set short- and longer-term prioritised targets to enhance assessment by focusing on activities that would help to ensure that assessment tasks, assignments and feedback could fully contribute to student engagement and positive outcomes.

References:

Farrell, A.M., Buckley, K., Glynn, M., Lowney, R., Smyth, S. and Stone, S. (2021) *Moving large classes online: Illuminating the experience of the sudden transition of large, face-to-face programmes to the online environment in Dublin City University, in response to the Covid-19 crisis*. Dublin: Dublin City University. Available at: https://dx.doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.4574650
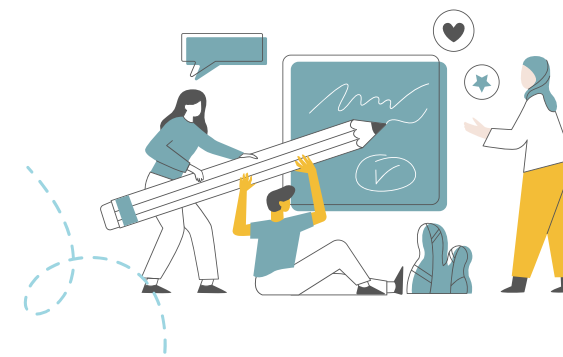
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