
ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES FOR MINI-TERMS



3 Methods:
AUTHENTIC,
PEER,
& SELF-ASSESSMENT

Assessing students during a mini-term presents a number of challenges.

The time constraints associated with mini-terms require that instructors carefully design assessments in advance. In addition, the accelerated nature of a mini-term course will likely change the number and pace of instructor and student interactions. This will render some traditional formative and summative assessments unusable.

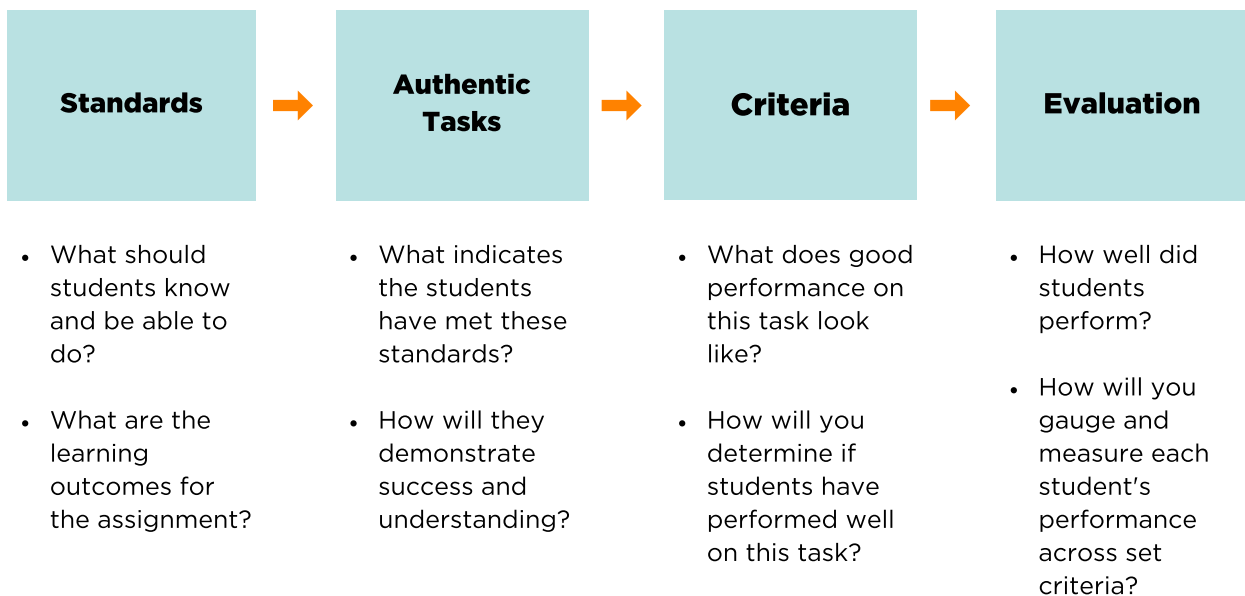
To address these challenges, instructors should consider alternative strategies that focus on real-world learning experiences and student-directed assessments to make the most of the shortened semester. This document introduces three strategies for use during a mini-term: authentic assessment, peer assessment, and self-assessment.

Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment involves the direct examination of a student's ability to use knowledge in a task-based scenario similar to what is encountered in the "real-world" (McMillan, 2018).

Authentic assessment is a form of performance-based assessment where students undertake tasks based on scenarios or settings they might encounter outside the university environment. Constructing authentic assessments means giving careful attention to the kind of scenarios or settings to be deployed.

In the design process, instructors should consider four areas: the standards we set for our students, the authentic tasks that students will experience, the criteria against which students will be measured, and how we will evaluate student performance. Consider the questions posed in the diagram below:



For examples of authentic assessments that you can use, please review Indiana University's [website on authentic assessments](#).

Using Peer Assessment

Peer assessment happens when students provide feedback on each other's work. By creating small groups for peer assessment, you can provide students with a support network throughout the mini-term. In this setting, students will hold one another accountable to attend synchronous sessions, participate in breakout sessions, complete asynchronous assignments, and stay active in the peer review process. Small groups will also help students to develop problem-solving, interpersonal, and communication skills, all of which are difficult to develop in seclusion, but require feedback and interaction with peers.

If you implement peer assessments, provide students with clear expectations about what contributions and feedback should include. This will help keep feedback consistent, constructive, and usable for student improvement and learning. This can be done by:

1 Including detailed instructions



2 Explaining the assessment instruments and their purpose



3 Providing examples of good feedback and discussion posts to students



4 Demonstrating collaborative behavior by contributing to discussions & providing feedback based on the standards you set for your students



Students who understand the assessment process and how to deliver constructive and effective feedback are more invested in the learning process, taking ownership of their learning. Be sure to maintain dialogue around good collaborative behavior and feedback with your students.

For different types of peer assessment and other information, please review Iowa State University's [website on peer assessment](#).

Using Student Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is important so students can assess their ability to communicate or demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Students can test themselves in a number of different ways, such as flashcards, online quizzes, and reflection activities.

Reflection is an integral part of the self-assessment process. Reflection promotes deeper learning by encouraging students to understand what they know and don't know, so they can investigate the subject matter to fill in the gaps. These types of assessment help students and instructors address equity gaps in students' learning, too. Please see [TLI's reflection activities](#) document for additional ideas.

Additional Tools to Foster Classroom Assessment

Discussion Boards

Use discussion boards for blogging or journaling by setting up a board for small groups. For more information, see OIT's [Discussion Board How-To](#) resource.

Canvas Studio

Students can use [Canvas Studio](#) to create vlogs (video blogs) so they have a place for reflection. Self-reflection provides context for what the student has learned, is learning, and still needs to learn. You can check these regularly or at a few selected times during the semester.

Canvas Quizzes

Use [Canvas quizzes](#) as low-stakes formative self-assessment.

- Use higher-order thinking multiple-choice questions to help facilitate critical thinking and problem solving skills (see [Best Practices in Instrument Development - Test Development](#)).
- Be sure to add an explanation about why an answer is incorrect or correct so that students understand why that question is wrong.
- For highly visual subjects such as art appreciation or biology, you can replace one or two multiple-choice quizzes with a series of images and require students to “click” their answers.

Reference

McMillan, J.H. (2018). *Classroom assessment: Principles and practice that enhance student learning and motivation* (7th ed.). Pearson.



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