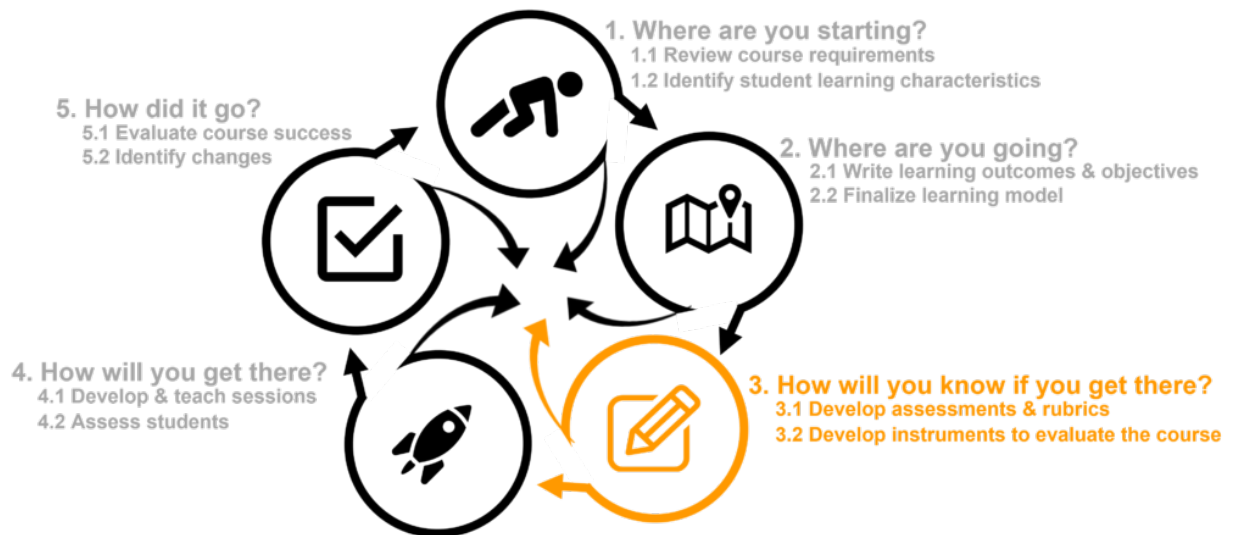# Step 3: How Will You Know If You Get There?

3.1 Develop Assessments & Rubrics

3.1 Results (What)

Student assessments, aligned to the learning outcomes and objectives, help you and your students measure progress toward the course goals. Course and teaching assessments help you identify how you can improve the current course and, potentially, other courses you teach. In this chapter you will decide what types of assessments and when in the course term to use them. You will also identify course reading materials at this point.

- Identification of how you will assess student learning
- Assessment description and questions– such as quiz and test questions, assignment details, etc.
- Rubrics for each assessment
- Selection of course readings and other materials your students will need
- A schedule for when each assessment will take place
- Updates to your syllabus

3.1 Overview (Why)

"Assessment instruments" specifically refers to instruments for measuring student learning. This includes any tests, activities, group work, projects, essays, assignments, graded and ungraded homework, etc. Assessments should be

designed to both help students master the course learning outcomes (formative) and help you determine how well each student and the whole class is doing (summative).

Activities, assessments, assignments, and options are discussed in C7. Feedback is discussed in C10. Rubrics are discussed in my blog Rubrics – Why, What, & How.

3.1 Suggestions/Instructions (How & What If)
The following suggestions are grouped into the following:
- Grading scheme
- Homework Assignments & Readings
- Assessments
- Metacognition & Transformative Assignments
- Tests & Quizzes
- Syllabus
- Feedback
- Group work
- Other

Grading scheme
1. Determine the value of each grade (A=90%, B=80%, P=60% vs F, etc.) and add this to your syllabus. (**C7**, C2)
2. Do not use competition for grades or awards and don't grade on a curve (Perez, 2020). (**B3, C7**)
3. Consider allowing students to define their own individual standard of performance or contract grading to encourage self-directed learning and a variety of assignment types. (**B3**)
4. Use formative assessments and feedback to provide progress checklists and opportunities for self-reflection. (**A4, A8, C7**, C10)

Homework Assignments & Readings
1. Assign students to groups for group homework and assignments (Check if your institution has a policy on assigning students to groups). (**A4, B3**, C11)
2. Find out what types of assignments your LMS can accept, and which can be automatically graded. However, don't forget to align these with both your learning outcomes/objectives and your responsibility to provide effective feedback.

3. Provide opportunities for early success, building difficulty into assignments as the term progresses. (**A4, B1**)
4. Consider how your assessments influence students' motivation to read course material. (**B1, C7, C8**)
5. Use real-world assignments to connect the content to the student understanding and motivation. (**A1, A4, A10, B1**)
6. Consider pre-session quizzes that check students understanding of the homework. (**C7, C8**)
7. Write discussion questions focused on readings. (**C9**)
8. Give students options on reading assignments to stimulate interest. (**A4**, C10)
9. "Limit reading to no more than 40 pages a week… Limit the number of assignments per week. Look for one quality assignment rather then [sic] 5 poorly executed assignments" (Lee et al., n.d.). (**A8, C8**)
10. Use a course workload estimator to determine if your combination of assignments and readings is appropriate. (**C10**)
11. Provide equitable access to materials such as books and articles by using library resources, allowing older text editions, and/or using OCR materials (Addy et al., 2020; Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, 2020). (**A8, C8**)
12. Arrange to have readings available in the library, print shop, bookstore, and/or on the LMS. (**A8, C8**)
13. Add final reading list from Worksheet 3.1e – Select Student Readings to the syllabus, including how students will gain access. (**C2, C8**)
14. Add readings to course schedule.

Assessments
1. Determine if you need a pre-assessment to identify current student knowledge and schema. (**A2, A9, C7**)
2. Identify student supports that might provide needed pre-requisite skills and knowledge. (**C7**)
3. Find out what types of assessments your LMS can accept, and which can be automatically graded. However, don't forget to align these with both your learning outcomes/objectives and your responsibility to provide effective feedback.
4. Allow students to experiment with different modes of displaying understanding (K. Andrews, personal communication, 2020) such as alternative presentation methods (group projects, videos and texts, individual or group presentations, group or individual written reports), low-threat

assignments & feedback, and alternative testing methods. (**A4, A8, A9, A10, B1, B3, C7**, C11)

5. Develop formative activities that provide you and your students an understanding of their progress toward course outcomes and lead to success in the summative assessment or activity. (**B2, C7**, C10)
6. Use low-stakes assessments often to help students acclimate to college and your style (Hargis, 2020; Lang, 2013). (**A4, A8, B1, B2, C7**)
7. If you have long-term activities (such as projects) that will be used for assessment, provide check-in points such as drafts or stages of development. (**C7**)
8. Map all assessments and activities (including homework and readings) to outcomes and taxonomies. Include objectives on each activity and assessment write-up for students. (**A3, B2, C7, C8, C10**, A6, B3, C2)
9. "Provide examples and/or illustrations of all major course assignments" (Online Education and Training, California State University system, n.d.). (**B3**)
10. For each course activity (including assignments and assessments) determine what type of technologies would be appropriate for you and for your students (you may want to list mandatory and nice-to-have separately). (**C5**, C3)
11. Provide points and a rubric for participation in discussions. (**B3, C9**)
12. Based on all your assessments, including homework and discussions, determine points or percentages for each. (**C7**)
13. Develop rubrics for assignments and activities, including peer and self-feedback rubrics. (**A4, C10**, blog [Rubrics – Why, What, & How](#), A3, A8, A9, A10, B1, B2, B3, C2, C3, C7)

Metacognition & Transformative Assignments
1. Consider international and diverse experts as well as content examples showing a variety of cultures, peoples, and situations (Addy et al., 2020; P. Reid & Maybee, 2021, p. 2; Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, 2020). "Use open educational resources with different writing styles and voices" (Lee et al., n.d.). (**B3, C8**)
2. Use retrospective post assessments where students reflect on how their thinking has changed or a question on how they arrived at their conclusion. (**A2, A4**, A3)
3. Use written assignments or journals to help students verbalize their thinking. (**A4**, A3)

4. Design activities that "require students to engage with others from diverse backgrounds to gain information necessary for completing the tasks" such as expert interviews (Arkoudis et al., 2013, p. 228) and interview others (either other students or people not in class) who have different cultures/identify groups (Gordon et al., 2019, p. 6). (**A5, C7**, A3, A4)
5. Consider assignments which require the students to incorporate different cultural perspectives. (**A5, C7**)
6. Include "reflection through writing shared with classmates and writing that requires students to consider their own cultural histories and life experiences" (Smolcic & Arends, 2017, p. 68). (**A5, C7**, A4)
7. Provide information about 'tokenism' – that is, signs that a person is being asked to speak for their entire age, culture, race, religion, disability, etc. (**A5**, C2)

Tests & Quizzes
1. Use short-answer and essay questions to enhance learning. (**B1, B2**)
2. Provide students with a selection from a series of questions or topics or allow them to propose a topic idea for feedback from the instructor (K. Andrews, personal communication, 2020). (**B1, B3**)
3. Determine if you need a summative assessment or if an activity will provide the needed assessment. (**C7**, C2)
4. If you want a high-stakes summative assessment, develop it. (**C7**)
5. Provide self-check quizzes or other knowledge checks to help students focus (*Information Overload: Executive Function & Cognitive Load*, n.d.). (**A4, A8, C7**, C10)
6. Provide models or hints to help students get started on problems or assignments (Information Overload: Executive Function & Cognitive Load, n.d.). (**A8, C7**)

Syllabus
1. Use Mayer's principles to ensure your instructions and rubrics are clear and concise. Make headings interactive links. (**A3, A8**, B6, C3)
2. Include course outcomes and objectives in the syllabus. (**B1**, C3)
3. Add student support services, such as health, disability services, technology support, etc. to the syllabus. Your institution may have required or recommended statements. (**A3**, C3)

4. If you decided to include reading skill information / references on Worksheet 3.1e, add these to the syllabus. (**C8**, C3)
5. Add all assessment and assignment information and rubrics to your syllabus (Chickering & Gamson, 1987 & Hattie, 2011) or provide them as hand-outs, in the LMS, or some combination, but make sure students have them available. (**A2, A4, B2, C3, C7, C10**, A3, A9, B1)
6. Update your syllabus with information about any extra costs, equipment (microphones, headsets, phones, clickers, phones, etc.), materials, and technologies students will need. Provide information on technical and use support. (**C3, C5**)
7. Provide strategies for students to help overcome biases and microaggressions such as developing group rules, limiting talking time per person, breaking into smaller groups at points and coming back to the larger group with ideas, etc. (**A5**)
8. Develop an instructor's schedule with all content topics, assessments, activities, and assignments.)
9. Add appropriate content topics, assessments, activities, and assignments to students' schedule in syllabus.)
10. Add information to the syllabus about grading group work and any major projects. (**C11**, C3)

Feedback
1. Consider adding contact information to the feedback for every assessment to remind students how they can get further support (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). (**B2**, C10)
2. Develop feedback for common mistakes and success for every assignment/assessment (Chickering & Gamson, 1987) using Hattie's feedback model. (**B2, C10**)
3. Require peer feedback on assignments (Arkoudis et al., 2013, p.230). Provide students with guidelines or a rubric for providing feedback and explain how the feedback will be used (will it impact grades, will it be used for revisions?...). (**B3**, C7, C10)

Group Work
1. Please note that some universities have policies about how instructors group students. (**C11**)
2. Check if a group management app is available. (**C11**, C5)

3. Assign students to groups of no more than 6. "When you work in the real world, you work with whoever you have to work with, and you don't choose your buddies" (Holland, 2019, p. 313). (**A1, B3, C11**)
4. Determine if you will allow voting students out of groups and repercussions. (**C11**)
5. Determine how you will provide long-term group work information to students (include in syllabus, hand-out in class, both?) (**C11**)
6. Develop a grading method for group work, including rubrics. Clearly explain how learners will be assessed (including how peer group members' input will be used). (**B3, C11**)
7. Develop a peer evaluation for group work. (**B3, C11**)
8. Ask groups to develop group rules regarding interaction within their group (Arkoudis et al., 2013, p.230). (**B3**, C11)
9. Ask groups to identify at least two methods for group communication, such as in-class discussions and out-of-class discussion boards. (**B3**, C11)
10. Ask students to discuss their communication styles and how these can be used to strengthen the group. (**A5**, C11)
11. Include peer progress reports on larger projects, where students provide feedback to you on how well group members are working together. (**B3**, C11)
12. If you are planning on using group activities/projects, ask students to complete a short questionnaire to identify their skills (R. Reid & Garson, 2016, p. 27). For longer group work (such as term-long projects) at set times ask the students to change roles. Include information on typical group roles and on how groups process (ex: Forming, storming norming, performing). Require that students change roles during group projects. (**B3**, C11)
13. Provide information about implicit bias such as assumed roles that may occur based on group's cultural and/or gender make-up. (**A5**, **B3,** C11)

Other

1. For projects and major assignments, include recommended (or required) steps to complete the task (Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, 2020). (**B3**, C7, C11)
2. Make revisions part of assignments – "Students benefit tremendously from opportunities to revise their work and reflect on how their thinking has improved" (Saaris, 2017). (**A4**)
3. If you are inviting a guest speaker, schedule it and add to class calendar. (**C11**, C3, C7)

4. Be very clear about what constitutes cheating and the consequences (Goldonowicz, 2014, p. 7). (**A10**)
5. Consider your approaches to cheating. How will you reinforce your syllabus statements about academic dishonesty? (**A10**)
6. Update your instructor's calendar.

3.1 Worksheets

3.1a – Prerequisites
Complete this form if you are concerned students may not have the prerequisite SKAs to be able to reach your learning outcomes.
3.1b – Assessment Identification
Use this form to begin identifying how you will assess students for each outcome.
3.1c – Assessment Summary
Use this if you want a summary of your assessment plan.
3.1d – Assessments, Instructions, and Rubrics Checklist
Use this checklist to help ensure your assessments and instructions are complete.
3.1e – Selecting Student Readings
Use this to match readings to outcomes and objectives, ensure you have a diverse set, and that they are appropriate for your students, and you know when and how to order them.
3.1f – Multiple Choice & True/False Questions
If you have MC and/or TF questions, this form might help you format them.
3.1g – Short Answer Questions
If you have short-answer questions, this form might help you format them.