

## Pros and Cons of Using Various Types of Assessment

	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<b>Objective Exams (e.g., Multiple-Choice, True/False, Matching, Short Answer)</b>	Faculty familiar with developing them	Feedback to student can be limited
	Easier to monitor possible plagiarism and cheating	May encourage surface learning only
	Cost-effective	Possibly measure students' test-taking ability vs. content knowledge & understanding
	Time-efficient to administer	Questions may be misinterpreted
	Facilitates rapid feedback through ease of scoring	May involve testing for low level knowledge only
	Broad coverage of content	Constructing high quality test questions may be difficult
		Generally, reliability and validity of tests are unknown
		Tendency to rely on publishers' test banks

### Tips for Objective Tests

- Collaborate on selected test questions to make sure they are targeting what you really want to assess
- Have unbiased readers check for misinterpretation
- Pay attention to question layout – make the test easy to follow
- Match your standards – it is easy for questions to get progressively more difficult year by year because YOU understand the material in a deeper way
- Always match syllabus objectives, intended learning outcomes and assessment questions. These should align directly.
- Let students know (by bracketing information on the test) how many points each question is worth and how much time it should take them to complete each section.
- Test questions out beforehand by embedding parts of the exam or similar questions in class assignments. See which ones are misunderstood ahead of time. Make changes as needed.

	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<b>Essay Exams</b>	Allow for student individuality & expression	ESL students or students with poor writing/thinking skills may be at a disadvantage
	Can reflect the depth of student understanding and higher order thinking skills	May not cover entire range of knowledge
	May include application of Problem-Based learning	Take time to grade
	Develop writing and critical thinking skills	Consistency of grading may be an issue
	Inexpensive and easy to administer; fast to construct	Possible confusion about what is being assessed: writing skills, content, or both

### Tips for Essay Exams

- Create well-designed rubric for grading
- Assessment grading team should take time to calibrate their grading so that scores from all the sections of a course are consistent
- Give students criteria for grading essays beforehand and examples of well-written versus poorly written essays
- Show students how to create essay “organizers” for answering essay questions. This organizational structure helps students keep focused in their essays.

<b>Written work</b> (reports, papers, research projects, book reviews, etc.)	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
	Active process involving critical thinking skills and revision skills	May be difficult to judge the breadth of student learning
	More flexible for students in preparing the end product	Plagiarism may occur
	Learning occurs in the process as well as in the completion of the end product	Takes time to grade
	Usually represents integrated learning	Not easily quantified
Offers students the opportunity to demonstrate learning		

### Tips for Writing Assignments

- Make the assessment criteria explicit for written work
- Create well-designed rubric for grading
- Assessment grading team should take time to calibrate their grading so that scores from all the sections of a course are consistent
- Give students an understanding of the “weight” and distribution of the grade: e.g., content, correct form, and level of critical thinking
- Encourage students to submit drafts to facilitate student learning and for better end products
- You may consider using peer assessment before the final products are submitted
- Giving students timelines for completion may assist them in time management

<b>Portfolio Assessment</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
	May contain evidence reflecting a wide range of skills & attributes such as research papers, exams, journals, case studies, CD-ROMs, DVDs, audio and videotapes, artwork, etc.	Assessment takes time
	Can reflect student learning over time	Difficult to assess objectively
	May reflect attitudes and values as well as skills & knowledge	Difficulty in grading consistency across diverse sets of portfolios
	Usually represents integrated learning	Not easily quantified
	Offers students the opportunity to demonstrate learning	Space needed for storage

### Tips for Portfolio Assessment

- Propose a general format for assembly of portfolios and necessary items for inclusion
- Don’t underestimate the time it takes to assess (or the weight to transport them!)
- Use rubrics and checklists for content assessment
- Provide interim assessment opportunities
- Allow students to see samples of successful portfolios
- Consider a final reflection on learning as part of the portfolio