



### Rethinking Assessment



Grades for college students are often tied to performance on summative assessments. In STEM related fields, women experience higher anxiety than their male peers. Students from lower-income backgrounds may experience increased anxiety about academic performance in testing contexts, which can undermine their performance. The repercussions of poor performance can be higher for lower-income students who often have less margin for error than higher-income peers.

How can we best support students while also maintaining course legitimacy?

#### **How do I reduce testing anxiety in my class?**

- Give students options to make the class and testing style fit their learning. Some options include:
  - Typed report or research paper
  - Recorded Zoom presentation
  - Written exam
- Develop appropriate vehicles of assessment that work for various groups of students and your class. If the suggestions above are not applicable, what method of testing would help?
- Set clear expectations from the beginning on what the course material will cover, how the projects will be graded, and what the different testing options will be.

#### **How do I make different methods of assessments fair?**

- Have clear parameters and learning objectives. This will allow for different applications of the same learning targets.
- Set a clear threshold of who is eligible to re-take a test and what the process looks like.
- Offer different assessment options based on class size and content. Larger classes might only have capacity for two options of testing methods instead of three, like smaller classes.

#### **Rubrics are critical to success**

- The challenge is to build one rubric for multiple styles of assessments.
- Good rubrics will make for easier and more consistent grading of projects/tests. Different levels of classes might require more specific direction than others.
- Thorough rubrics will give students clear guidance on what you expect from any method of testing.

### References

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