

## **ID 38 – IUPS 2022- Post Conference Teaching Workshop Symposium**

Title of the symposium: **Ensuring student engagement in online learning: role of technology and teachers**

Title of the talk: **The Use of Alternative Assessments in Synchronous and Asynchronous courses**

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With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, instructors quickly learned that giving the same style of exams that were previously given in the face-to-face classroom setting were not effective in assessing student knowledge in the online delivery model. Technology savvy students quickly learned they could access the internet for the answers and still complete their exams in the time limit provided. Many universities responded to this type of student exam taking strategy by using proctoring software. While some found the software effective in reducing the internet searching, others stated it created more anxiety for students and performance decreased. At some institutions proctoring software was not permitted so an alternative style of exams was needed. The goal of educators is to promote students' critical and analytical thinking. In many cases our assessments are not measuring these skills. Redesigning a course to decrease the weight of the exams is the first step to ensure answers are student authored and anxiety is decreased. For the first exam students performed a research article analysis related to course content, explained the relevance of the work and hypothesized next steps for the research. At the end of the course students were surveyed using a five-point Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. Students agreed that they learned new information while preparing for exam 1 (4.6/5) and the format was a good way to assess their content knowledge (4.4/5). They also agreed that exam 1 was more fun than a traditional exam (4.5/5) and they would prefer more exams with the same format (4.4/5). Creating exam questions where students need to rely on deeper thinking beyond a memorized answer more effectively measures comprehension. By providing the students with the exam questions in advance allows more time for them to delve deeper into the material. Exam two in a different course, asked students questions that related to course content but which they needed time to creatively answer the questions. These types of questions used higher level of Bloom's taxonomy such as evaluation, critiquing, judging and comparing information. Again, students agreed that they learned new information while preparing for exam 2 (4.6/5) and the format was a good way to assess their content knowledge (4.3/5). They also agreed the exam 2 format more fun than a traditional exam (4.4/5) and would prefer more exams with the same format (4.2/5). When students learn by doing and not memorizing, their learning is enhanced. The redesigned assessments ensured students authored their work and effectively measured their content knowledge while reducing student anxiety. These types of assessments will continue to be given post-COVID.

