The assessment of learning is undoubtedly a complex subject. Conrad and Openo (2018) point out the importance that students associate with assessment as part of their approach to learning, as well as emotional characteristics such as motivation, anxiety or stress. Assessment is therefore at the heart of the teaching/learning relationship. When it comes to assessment in distance/online instruction, an additional level of complexity can easily emerge. How do you assess learning using a technological tool? How can we reconcile assessment with the need to monitor the progress of students in an online learning modality? How does one find a balance between formative and summative assessment?

A few thoughts...

- The transition to distance/online learning offers new technological tools to assess student learning. **Be careful not to fall into the trap of "over-evaluation".** It is easy to quickly produce a series of quizzes or discussion forums, or a plethora of small assignments that are easy to submit and grade electronically. For some students this kind of approach is difficult to follow (the pace is often too fast) and can cause stress and the feeling of always being in assessment mode. It is important to remember that the assessment of learning must be aligned judiciously with the learning outcomes of the course (as outlined in the course syllabus).

- "Over-evaluation" in a distance/online course is often the result of a need to monitor students' progress or to ensure that students complete the learning activities proposed online. While this is a legitimate concern, other strategies can be used. For example, using the "**Class Progress**" tool in Virtual Campus is an effective strategy for obtaining an overview of the activities completed by students and, when necessary, more specific details by accessing a student's specific profile.

- The use of formative assessments (i.e., tasks that are not included in the final grade of a course, but rather serve to guide the student's learning and provide feedback) is also a more effective way to track student progress. A well-designed distance/online course **finds the right balance** of formative assessment strategies (to monitor student progress and learning) and summative assessment strategies (to measure the achievement of course learning outcomes).

Finally, if you would like to clarify components of your assessment strategies or if you are looking for assessment strategies that could better meet the specific needs of your students and of your courses, do not hesitate to contact the TLSS team.

Conrad, D. & Openo, J. (2018). Assessment Strategies for Online Learning – Engagement and Authenticity. [https://doi.org/10.15215/aupress/9781771992329.01](https://doi.org/10.15215/aupress/9781771992329.01)