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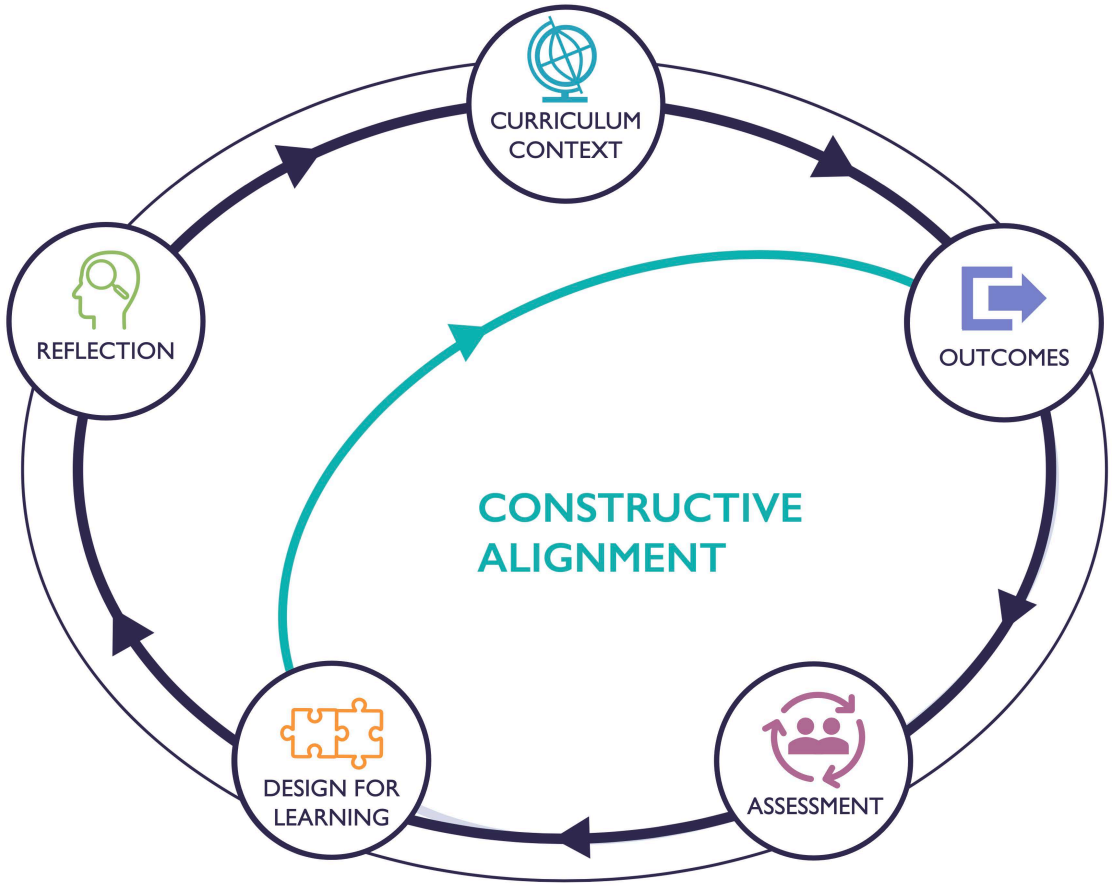
Designing Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DeLTA) process

A Guideline for Emergency Remote Teaching



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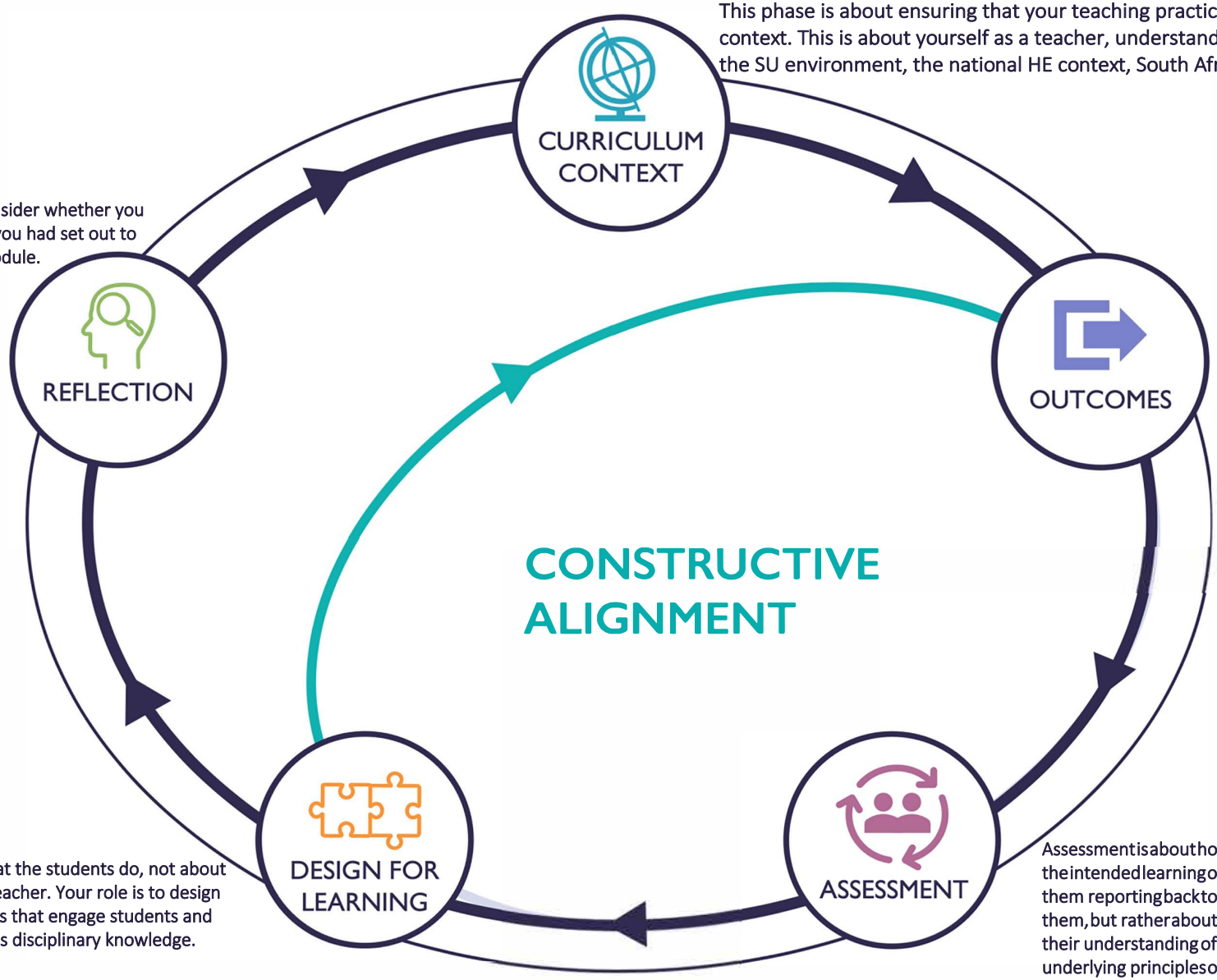
Date of creation: 3 July 2020

Teaching, learning and assessment @ SU:

There is not one way of understanding or explaining teaching, learning and assessment, no toolkit, recipe or ten tips.

The DeLTA cycle offers you an organizing framework, rooted in scholarship, for Designing Learning, Teaching and Assessment. It is divided in 5 iterative, cyclical processes of designing interactive learning activities, innovative teaching approaches and wide-ranging assessment opportunities.

This phase is about ensuring that your teaching practice is responsive to the context. This is about yourself as a teacher, understanding your students, the SU environment, the national HE context, South Africa and beyond.



This is where you consider whether you have achieved what you had set out to achieve with your module.

Outcomes are the end goals of the learning process. They are formulated to describe the result of student learning at the end of the learning opportunities. This is not about content but rather about the concepts and underlying principles of the field of study.

Learning is about what the students do, not about what you do as the teacher. Your role is to design learning opportunities that engage students and enable them to access disciplinary knowledge.

Assessment is about how well your students achieve the intended learning outcomes. This is not about them reporting back to you what you have taught them, but rather about how well they demonstrate their understanding of the key concepts and underlying principles of their field of study.

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It is important that the outcomes of your module should reflect in the learning opportunities you design for students and in your assessment tasks. These three phases form a cycle of their own, called the constructive alignment process.

CURRICULUM CONTEXT

POLICY CONTEXT

The *Teaching and Learning Policy* promotes an enabling institutional environment where quality teaching and learning can flourish across the student body, the academic staff cohort, support services divisions and management bodies. Each of these role-players has certain responsibilities (summary infographic).

The *Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2017-2021* describes SU's approach to teaching and learning, while operationalising the vision and strategic priorities for teaching and learning in terms of graduate attributes.

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This phase examines the current context within which teaching and learning needs to take place. SU's approach to teaching and learning, as set out in the *Teaching and Learning Policy*, is learning-centred and digitally supported, and should underpin all teaching, learning and assessment activities.

The COVID-19 context is one of emergency remote teaching (ERT), which differs from online learning. As explained by Hodges and colleagues in an article published on EDUCAUSE in March 2020, while online learning is planned and designed to be online from the outset, ERT is "a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances". The purpose of ERT is "not to re-create a robust educational ecosystem but rather to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional support in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis" (Hodges et al., 2020). Yet it is important to note that even though the move to ERT is not an overhaul of the "educational ecosystem", the change in modality still requires some adjustment in how we conceptualise and deliver a module. This means that some outcomes and assessments might have to be reconsidered. We are in the fortunate position to have learnt from the recent experience of ERT, and might even have gained insights and ideas that will inform our teaching beyond the COVID-19 period. (Click here for further reading.)

COVID-19 ARRANGEMENTS – SENATE DECISIONS FOR THE COVID-19 PERIOD

1. Most undergraduate (including honours) teaching and assessments for the remainder of semester 2 of 2020 shall be online only, until all students have returned to campus..
2. Postgraduate coursework teaching shall be, and assessments may be, online for the remainder of semester 2, until all students have returned to campus.
3. The requirements for progression to second-semester modules (based on first-semester modules) were waived.
4. All SU students who were registered in 2020 will be automatically readmitted for the 2021 academic year, notwithstanding insufficient academic performance in 2020
5. All students who failed a first-semester module in 2020 will be admitted to exam A4 in January 2021, as it is virtually impossible to distinguish between the various circumstances that may have handicapped students in SU's online teaching and assessment mode.
6. New material may be offered in English only. Note, however, that the Language Centre's translators are available and ready to translate English podcasts into Afrikaans.

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MORE INFORMATION

- COVID-19 website (latest information)
- Communiqués
- COVID-19-amended Calendar
- More reading
- Student support site
- Centre for Teaching and Learning
- Centre for Learning Technologies
- Language Centre
- Centre for Academic Planning and Quality Assurance

ADVICE

1. Start with what you have.
2. Consider credits and notional hours in the online environment, and make allowances for those students who may take longer to navigate this space.
3. Ensure that outcomes, assessments and learning opportunities are aligned.
4. Consider the following steps in preparing for online teaching, learning and assessment.
5. Communicate with students and make sure that you have an online presence, e.g. through synchronous online sessions, forum posts and e-mail.
6. Consider using the SUNLearn template that has been especially designed to assist you in this process:
   a. See the one-page overview of the template.
   b. Watch the "How to use this template" video.
   c. Contact your faculty blended-learning coordinator (BLC) to request that the template be imported to your module, and for assistance with editing it.
   d. Interested in using *only the text* featured in the template and adjusting it for your own page? Click here.

WEBINARS AND OTHER RESOURCES ON THE CURRICULUM CONTEXT

Some webinars touched on topics relating to the curriculum context, such as the webinar on copyright and online learning material.

1. Webinars
2. Disability Access Policy
3. Universal design for learning (UDL) video
4. Guidelines for academic literacies

A comparison of different delivery modes that are being used at Stellenbosch University:

Face to face (F2F) Conventional mode of delivery with minimal use of digital technology.	F2F with integrated digital practices Delivery that is rooted in contact sessions, but fully supported by a digital approach, such as the use of a learning management system (LMS).	Hybrid learning Delivery that provides for a number of block contact sessions per annum. The rest of the learning and teaching takes place online, including a combination of synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (self-paced) activities.	Fully online learning The course is presented in the full online mode, with no F2F contact opportunities.
	ERT		

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Back to the DeLTA Framework

OUTCOMES

When we teach, we should have a clear idea of what we want our students to learn. More specifically, we should be able to stipulate, topic by topic, how well each topic needs to be understood. For this reason, it is vital that we clearly articulate our outcomes in written statements that require students to demonstrate their understanding in practice instead of simply writing about it in formal exams. In designing curriculum outcomes, therefore, it is necessary to clarify what levels and types of knowledge our students should demonstrate in relation to which topics, and what performances of understanding would provide us with this information. During emergency remote teaching, some outcomes might no longer be achievable, necessitating more appropriate alternatives (see advice section below).

COVID-19 ARRANGEMENTS – SENATE DECISIONS

Faculties were requested to determine the details of changes to assessments (modes, procedures, etc.), academic programme-level outcomes or other SU faculty-specific Calendar stipulations, and to report these to the Executive Committee of Senate.

ADVICE

Consider your learning outcomes in terms of the following:

1. Align the outcomes and assessment and learning opportunities with one another, as well as with the relevant level descriptors.
2. Be sure to create learning and assessment opportunities with a view to higher-order outcomes.
3. Can you still achieve all your outcomes, or are there outcomes that are no longer achievable, e.g. certain practical skills?
    a. Consider alternatives, as well as whether certain aspects of the outcomes or tasks can be retained.
    b. Are there opportunities for new outcomes to be included? Consider the SU graduate attributes in the *Strategy for Teaching and Learning*.

POLICY CONTEXT

The SU Teaching and Learning Policy (summary infographic)

The SU Strategy for Teaching and Learning, 2017–2021

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WEBINARS AND OTHER RESOURCES ON LEARNING OUTCOMES

Although none of the webinars focused explicitly on outcomes, a number did address associated topics that might be useful. For instance, many of the assessment webinars – such as those on preparing for online seminars, labs, practicals and clinical assessments, rubrics, feedback, and open-book and take-home exams – referred to the importance of aligning outcomes with assessment tasks.

1. Why do we have to formulate learning outcomes?
2. What are learning outcomes?
3. Taxonomies of learning
4. Formulating outcomes
5. Constructive alignment

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ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

POLICY CONTEXT

The *SU Assessment Policy and Practices* document offers a set of guidelines for effective assessment. It assumes that the lecturer is best positioned to make appropriate assessment decisions and align the assessment with the intended learning outcomes and opportunities. This is referred to as "constructive alignment". Watch this podcast for more information.

The *SU Policy on Plagiarism*, in turn, aims to ensure that mechanisms are in place to enable staff and students to promote academic integrity and mitigate plagiarism. In addition, the *Procedure for the investigation and management of allegations of plagiarism* sets out guidelines to ensure that plagiarism cases are dealt with consistently and fairly.

Finally, *the Regulation for internal and external moderation and the processing of results* sets out the principles and procedures for the internal and external moderation of SU assessments.

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Two key purposes of assessment are *formative* assessment and *summative* assessment. *Formative* assessment (or assessment for learning) often forms part of formal learning opportunities and is aimed at helping students direct their own learning. S*ummative* assessment (or assessment of learning) is aimed at making decisions about student learning, such as whether or not students should be promoted. Although not its primary purpose, summative assessment can also provide students with indispensable formative feedback on their learning. While the COVID-19 period poses unique challenges for *summative* assessment, it does offer unique opportunities for *formative* assessment.

A third purpose of assessment is *sustainable* assessment (or assessment as learning), which prepares students to become lifelong learners who are able to adjudicate their own performance. Self-assessment and peer assessment are important tools to achieve this.

COVID-19 ARRANGEMENTS – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (SENATE) DECISIONS

1. Most undergraduate (including honours) teaching and assessments for the remainder of semester 2 of 2020 shall be online only, until all students have returned to campus.
2. Where professional bodies require invigilated examinations or in-person moderation, faculties may schedule these examinations once students have returned to campus, but before the start of the 2021 academic year, in consultation with the Registrar's Division.
3. The class mark on the examination system is waived.
4. External examination and moderation decisions are devolved to faculties.
5. Tutors/teaching assistants and other peer facilitators involved in conducting formative and/or summative assessment need to be adequately trained, monitored and supported.

ADVICE

Consider the following when moving your assessment online:

1. Include more opportunities for confidence-building, low-stakes formative assessment with feedback.
2. Use high-stakes summative assessments carefully and sparingly.
3. Use more open-ended, open-book, authentic tasks where no two responses should be the same.
4. If traditional online tests are required, consider:
    a. using large test banks that allow for randomisation;
    b. staggering question release; and
    c. setting a time limit.
5. If possible (i.e. if you have large enough question banks, or if questions are sufficiently open-ended), leave online assessment tasks open for longer than the completion time limit.
6. Ideally set assignment dates for a week before exams start to afford students a chance to prepare for the examination.
7. Consider connectivity and keep assessments data-light.

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8. Consult the communiqués on assessment issued during this time, especially those on preparing for second-semester teaching, learning and assessment (T&L&A) during COVID-19.
9. Consider using the honesty plug-in for e-assessments. You can download the instructions here.
10. Clearly communicate to students how assessments are structured (e.g. how much A2 contributes to the total score, etc.).

WEBINARS AND OTHER RESOURCES ON ONLINE ASSESSMENT

Various of the webinars addressed topics relating to student assessment. These included general topics – such as preparing for online learning, reliability and validity, and best practices for online tests and exams – as well as more specific assessment opportunities and methods – such as multiple-choice questions (MCQs), group work, formative assessment, calculations and using rubrics.

1. Webinars
2. Get started with online assessment:
    a. Taking stock - where are you?
    b. Use this flow chart to orientate yourself in terms of where you are and what you need to put in place.
3. Start with what you have. Use this table to plot what you have, and then consider alternatives to use in your remote assessment strategy (download a copy of the table here).
4. Consider alternatives to what you have:
    a. Consult the list of possible alternatives to well-known face-to-face methods.
    b. Simple classroom assessment techniques
    c. Searchable database of methods with proven reliability in this space
    d. Example strategies
5. Specific assessment-related topics:
    a. Formative assessment and feedback
    b. Rubric design and use
    c. Using MCQs
    d. Informal student feedback using classroom assessment techniques (CATs)
    e. FAQs
6. Online language support

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LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Learning is an active, cumulative process of knowledge-building, including the attitudes, values and skills that help students develop graduate attributes. The facilitation of meaningful learning, therefore, implies the creation of learning opportunities that will support knowledge-building. Knowledge goes beyond disciplinary content, however. It also includes the principles, concepts, procedures and practices underpinning how knowledge is constructed within and across disciplines. Actively engaging students in the learning process is an important prerequisite for knowledge-building, and is essential for meaningful learning. Engagement can occur through the implementation of various strategies, such as active learning, cooperative learning, collaborative learning, service learning, problem-based learning, group work or group projects, and research-based learning (inquiry). The level of engagement created by the learning opportunities is linked to the stated learning outcomes.

Learning opportunities can be designed for student-student, student-lecturer and student-content engagement, and could take place F2F or via technology. Consult the article "Pedagogies of engagement: classroom-based practices" by Smith et al. (2005) for more background and information.

COVID-19 ARRANGEMENTS – SENATE DECISIONS

Most undergraduate teaching and assessments for the remainder semester 2 of 2020 shall be online only, until students have returned to campus.

ADVICE

1. Clearly communicate arrangements and expectations to your students. You may want to use the template provided for this purpose .
2. Focus on asynchronous interactions during emergency remote teaching.
3. Carefully structure your learning opportunities, ensuring that you (i) encourage student-faculty contact, (ii) encourage collaborative learning, (iii) encourage active learning, (iv) give prompt feedback, (v) emphasise time-on-task, (vi) set and communicate high expectations, and (vii) acknowledge and design for diverse talents, ways of learning and COVID-19 circumstances.
4. Keep learning opportunities data-light to allow for variations in internet connectivity and bandwidth.

POLICY CONTEXT

Teaching and learning at SU is guided by the:

- *Teaching and Learning Policy* (summary infographic); and
- *Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2017-2021*.

Also see:

- *Policy on teaching and learning materials*
- *Strategy for the use of ICT in learning and teaching*

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Training site for tutors – Copy this link to share with your tutors: https://learn.sun.ac.za/course/view.php?id=56711

Zero-rated access: FAQs

5. Use SUNLearn as far as possible, as this platform offers zero-rated access via most mobile data providers.
6. The following checklists may also be useful:
    a. Essential information that should be on your SUNLearn module page
    b. Clarifying your tutors' (online) roles and responsibilities

WEBINARS AND OTHER RESOURCES ON LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Many of the webinars touched on topics relating to the creation of online learning opportunities during this time. They either focused on how to think about and approach these learning opportunities, or the technical aspects associated with these opportunities, or both. Examples include creating online tutorials for self-paced learning, preparing for online teaching, demystifying 'data-light', and ways to update your SUNlearn page to best facilitate learning.

1. Webinars
2. Developing my module online: What should I be able to do on SUNLearn?
3. Master list of all the tools and tips on the SUNLearn site
4. Where do I go for extra support?

Laurillard (2012) suggests that our learning environments should be structured to include six ways of learning. The table below offers some suggestions in this regard:

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Types of learning	Explanation: The learner …	Traditional (F2F) learning activities	Online learning activities
Acquisition	… listens to a lecture or podcast, reads books or websites, and watches demos or videos	Typically lectures, class presentations and documents	Reading multimedia websites, listening to podcasts, watching animations, videos
Inquiry	… explores, compares and critiques the texts, documents and resources used in the module	Could include fieldwork, visits, collections of different resources	Comparing digital texts, using digital tools to analyse data, using online advice and guidance, virtual realities
Practice	… adapts actions to the task goal and uses the feedback to improve the next action	Worked examples, simulations, interactive games, model answers	Virtual labs, simulations, online role-play activities
Production	… articulates conceptual understanding, and how this was used in practice	Producing an essay, critique on literature, project reports	Producing and storing digital documents, animations, videos, blogs, e-portfolios
Discussion	… articulates ideas and questions, and responds to others' ideas and questions	Seminars, small-group discussions	Online tutorials, web-conferencing, synchronous & asynchronous online forums
Collaboration	… discusses, practises and produces a joint product with others	Group projects, group work	Wikis, chatrooms for discussing a collaborative digital output

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REFLECTION

The reflection phase affords lecturers the opportunity to establish whether the module, and their teaching, achieved its stated objectives and outcomes. Now that we have had to move our teaching online and off-campus, it is more important than ever before to maintain contact with our students and obtain their feedback on how they are progressing with their learning. Teaching face to face in class, it is usually possible to gauge students' faces and non-verbal expressions when we explain or ask something. In the online space, however, we need to employ other techniques to determine how well students are learning, and how well we are teaching. This reflection can occur by gathering data and/or obtaining feedback through the lecturer feedback form, peer observations and formal or informal student feedback using classroom assessment techniques (CATs). This information can then be used to inform the curriculum context for the next round of teaching, learning and assessment.

COVID-19 ARRANGEMENTS – SENATE DECISIONS

1. In light of COVID-19 and the start of the second term via the online SUNLearn platform, the student feedback questionnaire had to be adapted and aligned.
2. Going forward, student feedback will follow a three-pronged approach:
    a. The revised COVID-19 electronic student feedback questionnaire will be implemented through the usual formal structure and process. Download the questionnaire here.
    b. Lecturer capacity will be built using classroom assessment techniques – a webinar was presented on this topic (see link below).
    c. Faculties are to supplement the above in ways they might already have in place.
3. External examination and moderation decisions are devolved to faculties.

ADVICE

1. Consider using classroom assessment techniques to obtain informal feedback on student learning, attitudes and experiences to inform your teaching approach.
2. Download the COVID-19 student feedback form to help you reflect on your own teaching with a view to improving.
3. Consider using the lecturer feedback form to add your own reflections to the process.
4. Informal student feedback could also be gathered via the class representatives.

POLICY CONTEXT

The *Student Feedback Policy* describes SU's approach to student feedback. It departs from the premise that student feedback should firstly aim to empower individual lecturers to improve their own teaching.

Also see:

- Lecturer feedback form
- *Rules for obtaining and utilising student feedback about programmes, modules and lecturers*
- *Regulation for internal and external moderation and the processing of results*

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Contact the Student Feedback Office at stv@sun.ac.za.

Download the student feedback questionnaire.

WEBINARS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON USING FEEDBACK FOR REFLECTION

Some webinars touched on the topic of using feedback for reflection, e.g. obtaining informal student feedback using classroom assessment techniques.

1. Webinars
2. Classroom assessment techniques using SUNLearn tools

EXAMPLES OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES (CATs)

CAT	Description	*On SUNLearn*
Background knowledge probe	A short, simple questionnaire to reveal students' preconceptions and help them get used to the new online environment.	Use multiple-choice and short-answer questions.
Minute paper	This technique tests whether or not students are gaining knowledge. The lecturer asks students to write a brief response to the question: "What was the most important thing you learned during this class/section?"	Use a quiz with a short-answer question. Post responses on a discussion board for students to read and respond to.
Muddiest point	This is one of the simplest CATs to help assess where students are having difficulties. Students are asked to identify what they found the "muddiest", "most unclear" or "most confusing".	Use the discussion forum.
What's the principle?	This technique is useful in modules requiring problem-solving. Once students have figured out what type of problem they are dealing with, they are asked to decide what principle(s) to apply to solve the problem.	A survey with multiple-answer questions (allowing multiple options to be selected as the answer) normally works best.
One-sentence summary	This CAT enables lecturers to determine how succinctly though comprehensively as well as creatively students can summarise a large volume of information on a topic.	Students view a video clip/read an article, and then answer a short question, e.g. "In a sentence or two, describe what is the purpose of …".
Student-generated test questions	Students generate test questions to be used as part of formative assessment before a major exam. This allows students time to study feedback and make the necessary adjustments.	Use the forum. Students create a short-answer question and respond to two other students' questions. All communication occurs on a discussion board.

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