

# STEM - FIT

FORUM FOR INCLUSIVE TEACHING

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## TIPS AND TOOLS FOR INCLUSIVE TEACHING CONCEPT

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### Assessments

When considering equity, especially in an online environment, there are some best practices to consider. Incorporate more low-stakes and formative assessments into your curricula, provide students with opportunities to demonstrate learning in varied ways, and provide students with ample opportunities to practice the types of problems for which they will be formally assessed. In this issue, we provide alternative approaches to the traditional summative exam that assesses student learning while also promoting equity and encouraging integrity.

## TIPS AND TOOLS

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1. The **Public Exam** allows students to view a draft version of an exam, and even contribute to improving it, in advance of its administration. The draft version is ideally shared with students at least a week before the actual exam and it can be formatted in a variety of ways. The draft can include more questions than will end up on the exam—without informing students which questions will be selected for the exam—or it may have only a subset of the questions that will end up on the exam. The provided questions can be formatted in a variety of ways. The full text of a particularly challenging question may be fully shared, while a multiple-choice question may be shared without any answer options (or vice versa). Or a graph may be provided without an associated question. This format gives students time to critically engage with content, ask clarifying questions, as well as identify mistakes or language that they find confusing. This approach has been shown to reduce anxiety, promote deep learning and eliminate barriers for students who may need more time to read and digest the instructions/question prompts. To learn more about Public Exams and the benefits they have for students and faculty, see this CourseHero Report by Dr. Ben Wiggins (University of Washington). <https://tinyurl.com/y5wkzfb3>

2. **Oral Assessments** can take on many forms, but usually appear in the format of class presentations. Alternatively, some faculty use them as one-on-one assessments that replace written quizzes and exams. The format will depend on the size of the course and the content under evaluation. There are strategies to reduce student anxiety and promote equity, and to learn more, see this video featuring Dr. Sayonita Ghosh Hajra of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics: CSU Chancellor's Office Professional Development for Student Success Series. <https://tinyurl.com/y2xguj5w>

3. **Mastery and Specification Grading** are gaining popularity as faculty both consider the challenges of assessing student learning in a virtual environment and reflect on the purpose and validity of the grading system in higher education. While the two strategies have some differences, they both operate to assign points (often all-or-none) based on whether the specifications or criteria of the assignment were met. They usually allow students to repeat and improve upon their work, and they have been shown to increase motivation and enhance the quality of student work. This article in Inside Higher Ed. gives a brief overview of Specification Grading: <https://tinyurl.com/hfozgtu>

## RESOURCES

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Alternative Approaches to Assessment Seminar Series hosted by the CSU Chancellor's Office has archived videos at: <https://tinyurl.com/y2xguj5w>

See our STEM-FIT Canvas Course for more resources:  
<https://csus.instructure.com/courses/71792>