## Selecting an Assessment Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>When to Use</th>
<th>Implementation Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Course assessments and assignments** | • When you need to capture direct evidence of course learning objectives (e.g., essays, projects, exams, quizzes, case studies) | • Consider the difference between formative (for learning) and summative (of learning) assessments  
  • Prepare students for a bigger (summative) assignment by giving them smaller, low-stakes tasks or quizzes (formative assessments) leading up  
  • Adopt a rubric for any assignments that entail the creation of an artifact or some form of student performance |
| **Journals, reflections or discussion board posts** | • When you need to gather informal reflections regarding student or participant experiences or perceptions  
  • When you are interested in seeing student or participant growth or commentary over time or hope to create a dialogue between students or participants | • Easy to administer either on paper or digitally, but may require qualitative analysis to glean themes or take-aways  
  • If you are looking for specific types of responses, be sure to articulate specific questions, prompts, or instructions  
  • If appropriate, adopt a rubric to more easily quantify and streamline the review of responses |
| **Surveys, minute papers or exit tickets** | • When you need to know what students or participants experienced or perceived  
  • When you need quick and/or anonymous feedback from students | • Relatively easy to administer and interpret  
  • Consider conducting a diagnostic survey at the start of the semester to supplement traditional end-of-term course evaluations or a pre/post to gain insight into changes over time |
### Method | When to Use | Implementation Considerations
--- | --- | ---
**Interviews or focus groups** | ● When you are exploring a particularly complex set of questions that may require on-the-spot follow up to dig deeper into the issue or phenomenon or as a follow up to an existing survey | ● Can be time intensive and require familiarity with qualitative data analysis procedures and/or software  
● Prepare an interview or focus group protocol  
● Be prepared to probe for more complete answers and draw out quieter participants  
● Consider recording the interview or focus group to ensure you do not lose any important data  
**For focus groups:** When discussion among participants may help to “jog” their memories and produce more complex or multi-faceted responses to questions

**Observations** | ● When the construct being measured (e.g., group collaboration, clinical observations) happens in real time | ● Adopt a rubric or checklist to ensure consistency across observations and/or observers

**Tracking data or learning analytics** | ● When you need to know if and/or how often students are engaging in certain behaviors, including their use of online tools (e.g., Canvas) | ● Check ahead of time to ensure the tools you’re using provide tracking information or analytics  
● Remember that behavior does not measure learning, but can provide context for how students are engaging with the learning environment (e.g., course tools, videos, readings)