**Designing Aligned Assessments Video Script Draft**

Hello, I’m Carol Subino Sullivan, Assistant Director of Faculty Teaching and Learning Initiatives at the Center for Teaching and Learning. In this video, I will explain how to use the backwards course design process to design an assessment plan that is aligned with your course learning objectives. I will also share some ideas for how to use this process to help you make the transition to remote teaching and learning.

In the backwards course design process, assessments are developed after the course learning objectives as shown in this diagram.

Learning Objectives

Assessment

Instructional Strategies

By developing the assessments based on the learning objectives, instructors ensure that assessments are well aligned with what they expect students to learn from the course. As you develop your assessment plan, you should identify one or more major assessments for each learning objective. This alignment with the learning objective also makes it easier to identify alternative assessments that are better suited for the remote learning environment. For example, if student presentations during a live session are not practical in our current circumstances, consider what learning objectives those presentations were meant to measure. How else might students demonstrate their mastery of this objective?

The diagram also illustrates that in the backwards course design process assessments are developed before the instructional strategies, including content and how students engage in this content. By developing the assessments before content, faculty can be more intentional about selecting the content to include. This is especially important in a compressed summer session when there isn’t much time for any extras. However, having a clear sense of the assessments can also reveal when it is important to include modules that help students develop essential skills that might have been otherwise overlooked or left as an afterthought.

A good rule of thumb is to have a major assessment at each third of the course, though this will vary depending on the nature of what you are teaching. Having the timing of assessments laid out will help you set the pace of the course. Consider whether you have left adequate time for students to engage with content and practice with low stakes assessment. What adjustments are needed to account for the compressed summer schedule? It is not uncommon to discover that you are trying to do too much. Are there any assessments that measure more than one goal? If so are there any redundancies you can eliminate?

A brief word about grading: In the syllabus, you’ll want to make sure that all graded assessments are clearly communicated to your students. Specify your expectations for each assessment, including the kind and quality of work they should do. Let them also know how and when you will communicate more details about each assessment. You should let students know the grading criteria you will use to evaluate their work well before they submit their work.

Outro: In this video you learned about how to develop assessments within the backwards course design framework. You thought about how to use learning objectives to evaluate changes you might make to your assessments in the transition to remote teaching.