



FLO\_Friday\_\_Alternative\_Assessment\_\_Negotiating\_Standards\_(Feb.\_18,\_2022)

**Transcript for FLO Friday Alternative Assessment Negotiating Standards  
BCcampus event held on February 18, 2022**

**Host: Helena Prins**

**Facilitator: Nicki Rehn**

HELENA PRINS:

Hello, welcome to FLO Friday. Let's see who's here. Feel free for the next few minutes to say hi if you want to say hi.

LEON:

Hi, Helena. It's Leon from ABC.

HELENA PRINS:

Hello, welcome back. Always nice to see. And there's Dana.

DANA:

Hi.

HELENA PRINS:

Hi, Dana. How are you doing?

DANA:

Good.

HELENA PRINS:

Very happy that you're here in this beautiful Friday. Welcome to those who are first-timers. Those who are familiar, it's nice to see your face.

NICKI REHN:

Yeah, I see a couple of people from way out east representing my colleagues at New Brunswick College of Craft and Design from Fredericton. Yay.

LEON:

Hey, Nicki. Active for four years and my husband was then posted to the army base, London.

NICKI REHN:

Excellent.

HELENA PRINS:

There's some kitten cuteness therefrom Dana. If you want to see and put yourself on gallery, you can see Dana's kitten so cute. Welcome. We're gonna start in one minute, but I always like to open and say hi. It's a beautiful day here in Victoria. I hope where you are, there's a bit of sunshine to anyone with some snow around them.

LEON:

I have snowdrops.

HELENA PRINS:

Oh, yeah, let's brag about the snowdrops around there.

LEON:

Snowdrops and crocuses, and all kinds of flowers coming up.

HELENA PRINS:

Fairly cold and snowing Barrie Ontario. I'm glad you joined us. OK, everyone. If there's any welcome. So, glad you're here. Done. Familiar micro-credential face and name that's ever here. OK, everyone. I am so glad that you have chosen to join us today on this FLO Friday was Nicki Rehn on alternative assessment, negotiating standards. My name is Helena Prins, and I'm an advisor here at BCcampus and I coordinate our family of FLO courses. FLO stands for Facilitating Learning Online. A few short housekeeping items. First, I'd like to let you know that we have a co-transcriber in the session, and you can show or hide captions from the CC live transcript button at the bottom of your screen. And we are adding an external link to view in the captions. You can see it in the chat right now. Also, please know that we are recording the session and afterwards we'll share the recording, as well as Nicki's beautiful slides with you. Please keep yourself on mute until you are called upon to speak. That just helps everyone to have a good audio experience. And then feel free to use the chat throughout this whole session to ask questions or make some comments. And if there's anything we can do here at BCcampus to make our sessions more accessible, please don't hesitate to reach out to me after the session or via email.

I'm speaking to you today from my home office here on beautiful Vancouver Island. I'm originally from South Africa, but it's been my wonderful privilege for the past 13 years to live, learn and facilitate on the unseeded traditional territories of the Saanich nation and the Lekwungen-speaking people, which include the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. I'm also deeply grateful to be part of a team here at BCcampus which is committed to building respectful relations of the first peoples here. Now, I cannot tell you how excited I am to welcome our global FLO facilitator today, Nicki Rehn. Nicki is joining us from the other side of the world and different time, completely. So, I'll let Nikki tell you more about that. Nikki, we are all very ready for you.

NICKI REHN:

Excellent. Thanks, Helena. And thanks, everyone. I'm so excited to be here with the BCcampus community. And I've done a lot with this fantastic group and with faculty and instructors from all over Canada. And I'm excited to see all those places pop up in the chat about where people are coming from. I'm actually coming to you from my home country of Australia right now and it's 3:00 in the morning. And I'm still got jetlag because I haven't been here very long. But it's still very exciting to be here. It was 37 degrees yesterday, and it's gonna be 38 today. So, it's actually conceiving that's three in the morning. I'm actually living in my parent's RV and I just got out of quarantine. So, I'm just excited to be here where my country's West State border just opened less than two weeks ago. So, I'm going to be jumping to the next slide.

Thanks. I'm going to be facilitating this workshop from my actual childhood hometown of Narrogin, as in Western Australia. And Narrogin is a funny-sounding name, like most towns in Australia. As code, it means place of water in the language of the traditional custodians. And they're called the Gnaala Karla Booja Noongar people. There's not actually a lot of water around here right now. I just

don't know why they called it that name. I just want to acknowledge that this place is actually where I grew up, and now the land on which my family still farm is and always will be Noongar land. So, if you haven't already, just go ahead and let us know in the chat where you're coming from today and any land acknowledgement you'd like to give. We can see where we're all from, I know there's some people from, so Barrie, Northwest Territories. I know Fredericton is represented and, of course, British Columbia and probably everywhere else in Canada. The other thing I'm just going to ask to just to get some interesting information is to find out how many FLO Friday sessions you've been to.

So, we've just got a poll that's going to come up in a second. So, the question is, how many FLO Friday sessions? the options are, this is my first, one to three, four to five, so many I've lost count. So, let's see how much experience we have here in these sessions. Just give you 10 seconds. If you can't do, it's on the poll, or you can just put in the chat as well. OK, let's see where the results are. Oh, wow. 45% of people, it's their first. Well, this is super exciting. Yay. And a few people of our groupies that always come. We love you. And I know I know lots of lots of people in this community. But, yeah, for those that are there first, I hope you love it. And I hope you love the community time that you're having your breakout sessions and that you continue to come back and do more for it with BCCampus. OK, next slide, please.

So, before we start, I want to explain the two assumptions on which I built this workshop just so you know where I'm coming from. And I made this assumption about you and why you chose to be here. First, based on the name of the title of this workshop, I assume that you're all into alternative assessment to some degree. Now, despite this, and aside from this, you still probably know that multiple-choice tests or in the traditional form of traditional assessment, do provide great reliability and efficiency. We know this. Right. You might even admit that in some cases, they correlate, and I say that word carefully, to learning and understanding. And by correlate, I want to be very clear that I mean, different to demonstrate or reveal learning and understanding. Which basically is to say that by fluke, they might be valid as well. If you're lucky, that would be a best-case scenario. I think it's fair to say that they also, in some cases, reveal something that we might be looking for if it's in our outcomes. Not that I see it very often, but perhaps we are looking for things like evidence of conscientious studying, capacity for us to sustain repetitive thinking. I took a lot of hundreds of question multiple-choice tests when I was doing my science degree many years ago, three hours of repetitive thinking. That wasn't in the outcome, by the way. But that's what was required of me. Perhaps deductive logic to a certain degree, I've never had that in any of my outcomes. But actually, to be fair, they do sometimes provide a broad evidence of a broad knowledge base that can be easily retrieved and codified. So, yeah, I think it's fair to say that. But they rarely do either of these things at all. They rarely reveal or, sorry, even correlate with understanding, and they also rarely connect to those outcomes. That's because we know this, there's a lot of false negatives and a lot of false positives. We've all known successful test-takers who are not actually that strong in the discipline of field of work. And a good example of this is just for fun, a few times I've taken the practice Red Seal exams that you can get off the government website. I once took the 20 question plumbing one. I know nothing about plumbing, but I have a science degree from 20 something years ago, 30 something years ago, and I passed it. You do not want me plumbing anything in your house, though. But more commonly, we know very capable competent students who struggle because the test itself is poorly written because they're hard to write. They cause undue stress and they focus on a really narrow way of thinking. And so we are starting as academics and educators to care more and more

about these false positives and these false negatives, and looking for some better validity in our assessments, which is why many of us have returned to alternative assessments. And I'm guessing that might be why you're here today. The trouble is, I'm gonna be honest today, is that when we leave behind the neat objective world of objective world of multiple choice tests to embrace more meaningful and learner-focused, authentic assessment, we run into new problems. And I hear about them all the time, and I bet you do too. So, if I could get the next slide.

One of the things I hear is this sentence, alternative assessments or authentic assessments, things that are not multiple choice traditional, are great, but dot-dot-dot. And I can almost always predict what's going to follow how this sentence finishes. And I bet you probably can, too. You've probably heard it, or maybe you've thought it yourself. So, I'm just going to get you to put in the chat how you've heard that sentence ended. And I'm just going to have a look at some of the things. So much work to develop and then mark. Lend themselves cheating. Take too much time, that time thing keeps coming up a lot. Too much work. Yeah, exactly. Too much to mark. Oh, this is why you're at the workshop. We're going to talk about marking. Too hard to be unbiased. Yes. Hard to figure out what's equitable. Thank you, everyone. Yeah, you can keep putting some things in there. That's great. But absolutely, I hear these things too, marking, fairness, time. And I actually hear sometimes that students don't like alternative assessments. And that's because they're not familiar or comfortable with the different genres of assessment. You know, multiple-choice are very familiar to people. And a lot of people have a certifying body, that's, you know, they don't have a lot of choice. So, these are a lot of actually legitimate reasons that I've had people finish this sentence. And I'm sorry, but we're not going to solve them all today. But I am going to look at the one to do with marking and fairness. And that did come up quite a bit today. So, that's really what this workshop is about. If I could get the next slide.

The second assumption I've made is that the concept of standards is a bit of a killjoy. The first thing that people picture normally when they hear the word standards is a set of requirements handed down by those in power that must be met. And, you know, we hear things like standardized exams, you know, ABC, you have the ITA, and, you know, across Canada, the Red Seal Exams for trades, nursing, board exams, licensure competencies, first aid even. All these things have these standards that, you know, even as an instructor, you don't have a lot of power or choice, you just have to do as you told and teach what's there. There's a feeling that there's something that's done unto the unsuspecting learner who is disadvantaged or shortchanged in some way by these assessments. And I would say for good reason, in my opinion, they are a bit of a killjoy. You know, they ruin that beautiful learning moment when you're trying to, like organically work with students. And then suddenly, you have to talk about standards and bring them up to a defined level. But let's put that aside for a minute and look at standards just from a different perspective. And I contend that standards actually exist in all of our learning settings. So, even if we're anti standardization, we are by nature of being in formal education, like pro standards. We just need to rethink who sets them, how they are set, and how they are communicated to students. And so today's conversation is going to be about that. It's going to be figuring these things out, and how to make standards a powerful tool for learning in a fair and authentic way through alternative assessments. So, we're going to not be talking about multiple-choice tests today, you can rest assured. OK. So, I'm just going to jump to the agenda so you know what's happening.

So, great. So, there's gonna be three premises that I'm going to present. And each one I'm going to illustrate quickly with an anecdote or a story. And then you're going to engage with it, and you're going to engage with it in three ways. For the first one, we're just going to think about a question independently in the big group. And then for the next two premises, we're going to put you in breakout rooms for about 10 minutes each. And I will just let you know that the breakout rooms will stay the same for the two. So, in that first one, you can spend the first couple of minutes getting to know each other, and you'll be with those same people in the second round. So, OK. So, let's get on to it. Let's get started.

Premise number one. Well, here are the three premises first and then we'll go through each one one at a time, just so you know. So, the first one was on the objectives on the information that went out. As validity increases, reliability decreases. And I've alluded to that, but we're going to unpack that a little bit. Number two. Oh, sorry. Can I get back to that previous slide? Thanks, Patrick. Good evaluative judgment requires taste of knowledge, which is gained through experience. And taste of knowledge is that knowledge that comes through wisdom that's sort of hard to codify and organize and teach. It's just what you get from doing things multiple times. And being able, you're building that perspective. And we want to help our students get that. We want our students to develop taste of knowledge. And so we're going to talk about how to do that. So, we're gonna talk about student involvement. And then number three is even for experts, marking alternative assessment is fraught. It is really hard. And I saw that in the chat reflected. So, we're going to talk about how we can collaborate to calibrate, which is hard to say. But calibrating so that we can, as a strategy for making our alternative assessment more reliable and better for our students. So, we are going to talk about students, we're going to talk about assesses. Great. So, let's get on to the first one.

Number one, as I said, validity. As validity increases, reliability decreases. And what exactly do I mean by this? Well, let's go back to the multiple-choice test and think about it for a second. If you do a multiple-choice test, it does not matter who marks it. It could be you, it could be your TA if you have one. I don't know if many people have them in colleges, perhaps at the universities. Your students could mark them, a computer can mark them, or you could go down to the street corner and asked Joe Bloggs to mark. But doesn't matter, the score will be the same because you're essentially adding up correct answers. You know, barring a few errors, it's mostly going to be the same. It's very reliable. And even personally, if you personally marked a stack of 100 exams, you know, as I said, barring a little fatigue, you're probably going to get the same result. This is classic instrument reliability. And it's why we use multiple-choice tests for things like national exams in order to, you know, largely efficiency, but also that reliability of marking. But as I mentioned just before, they are unlikely to be valid measures of the cause outcomes or the things we care about. So, we have high reliability, low validity. That's very common with multiple-choice test. But this doesn't actually apply only to multiple-choice tests. In fact, we can take a fantastic alternative assessment task and easily make it more reliable by just reducing the validity. That's if you want to make it reliable, you reduce the validity. I see this a lot and you probably have too. Like if I mark a persuasive essay, which I used to occasionally assign students when I was a professor, it's pretty easy for me to judge things like formatting, citation, use of active voice, spelling and grammar. The sorts of things you actually often see on a rubric, you know, maybe not worth tons of marks, but they are often the easiest one. But it is way harder to judge how convincingly the argument was organized and communicated, and how deep the understanding that that paper or that assessment actually

revealed. In fact, if they were the two criteria and I gave it to a whole bunch of markers and expert markers, they'd be actually less agreement even if I gave them a rubric. So, you know, if I had to mark the easy things, like spelling, grammar, those kinds of formatting, the checklist items that you see that students have to do, there's going to be more agreement. But those difficult, like there's really important things are harder to agree on. So, the question is, how do we reliably evaluate alternative assessments without reducing the criteria to a bunch of invalid items that you can just check off? How do we actually assess the things that matter? And I would say even more importantly, how do we do so in a way that empowers learners in the process?

So, the next two premises are going to actually answer these questions. But before that, what I want you to do is stop and think. I'm going to give you 30 to 40 seconds. And I want you to actually write this down, the act of writing it down sort of commits it to. Write down an authentic or an alternative assessment task or tool that you've used, or you've seen used or you've wanted to use, but you've struggled to evaluate or you've wondered about evaluation. So, I'm just going to give you. Just write it down for yourself. We're not sharing this. I'm just giving you 30 seconds. So, perhaps you put something like portfolio assessment or oral exam or project, post a project, creating a business plan, whatever these things, debates. Yeah, I see some things in the chat. That's great. Group assessment. So, these things we know are great, but we wonder about how to assess it well when we come to it. So, I just want you to keep that in mind as you go into your breakout rooms. Perhaps that's the one you want to think about. You're not tied to it, but it just helps to have something to tie this to your own context.

OK, let's get on to these answers. Premise number two. So, good evaluative judgment requires tacit knowledge, which is gained through experience. We need to help students develop this as they learn and to get there as well. So, I'm going to just start with a story about how I've experienced this personally. So, I occasionally write for a magazine in Western Canada, especially in Ontario as well. Could impact magazine. It's a health and fitness journal magazine. It's one of those free ones that you see at the cafe. And about 13, 14 years ago, I remember when I got my invitation to write my first feature article for the month on a sort of a journalistic piece on orienteering. And it was my dream to be a writer. I never became one and, you know, that this is my chance to actually get something published in print. And I was so excited, and I did so much work for this assignment. Sorry. Well, was an assignment, basically. This short piece feature article. And I worked. I researched, I rewrote, I rewrote, I worked. And like, I thought it was amazing when I finished it. And I was so proud to send it into the editor to, you know, check and then eventually publish. What happened, though, was quite the opposite. The editor wrote me back and started editing the first couple of sentences, and then just stopped. And I wrote in the notes, "Nicki, like, I see what you're trying to do. This is a great topic, please keep going. But I'm going to suggest you actually start all over again completely. I can't really edit this." And, you know, once I go pick myself up off the floor of devastation and heartbreak and self-esteem in the toilet, I actually then noticed that he took the second paragraph and he rewrote it for me to show me what I was meaning. And I then took that away. And after a couple of sleepless nights, I pulled up my socks and I sat down and read it. And I learned how to write and publish. And I've become, you know, it was the beginning of my journey to become a professional writer, which I do now many years later. So, what I learned through that process was that on the road to expertise, and especially at the start of that road, where I was at the time, and many of our students are, judging quality of work is actually really difficult. As a learner, I

can judge whether I put in my best effort, which I did, whether I was proud of it, which I was, and what the experience of being in that learning zone was. And I could talk about that, I could reflect on that. And those things are great things to know. And we ask those things of our students, and I think that's important. Helps us be reflective learners. But when it comes to judging quality in the early stage of being a learner, it's really difficult. I thought I'd done a really good job, but I had completely missed the mark. And I thought about at the time, I've always been an educator. So, I thought, what if I had a rubric? What if the editor gave me a general writing rubric? And I realized I wouldn't have produced better work.

Because if we can just go to the next slide, I've got an example of the kind of rubrics that we see. They're just really a bunch of hedged words, often. And this is would be, you know, a standard good one you get. I just pulled this off the internet. That, to be honest, you still need expertise in order to interpret the difference. So, you know, what's the difference between a convincing argument and a strong argument? I can guarantee the student has no idea. And often, instructors are like, we'll get to the next one about instructors. But often, that's hard for us to even define what those things are. So, rubrics are difficult, unless we start reducing them to those invalid items. Did you cite three things? Did you cite two things? Did you cite one thing? Really easy to mark, very reliable, not very valid. But these things here are valid, but very difficult to mark. So, the problem is that rubrics are just not the panacea we think they are. So, I'm just gonna put that out there. And, yeah, I face this all the time when I mark student work. I give them a great rubric like this, and particularly on a cool assessment. And I hear things like, "Hey, can you please really explain what you're looking for?" Or, "Can you check this before I hand it in to see if I'm on the right track?" And I'm like, "I gave you a rubric." But when you really look at it, you're like, No, they don't really know what this is. They don't know what it means, they still want to know what it is you're looking for. Well, so what's the answer? Well, I would say getting rid of rubrics is a bit dramatic. Although I could argue for it, but today, we're just going to talk about doing them better. And so we need to go back to the drawing board and ask about how rubrics can actually help our students understand notions of quality, success, competency, proficiency and expertise, by letting them see what success, competency, proficiency looks like. Practice judging it for themselves, and argue about it with others. Because that is how you develop that taste of knowledge. Is through practice of evaluative judgment, and how you continue to learn. So, I'm going to say, let's not get rid of the rubric. Let's build rubrics where we show and don't tell. So, this is an argument for show, don't tell rubrics. Let's get rid of these hedge wordy. These wordy rubrics and do showing rubrics. It takes time. But to be honest, that's how we developed our expertise. Is by lots of lots of viewing of samples of work and competencies and abilities, and being able to be able to judge that. And I'm just going to leave you with a quick example of how I've done this. So, if I could get the next slide.

So, when I was a teacher of teachers, I was a professor of education for about eight years. I used to do this activity. And I've done it many times since just for fun when I've done rubric workshops. But when I did it in this in with education students, this would take a week, this activity. And what I did was I would put them in groups because I want students to discuss and collaborate and talk about quality, and small groups. And I would say, "Your job is to create a rubric for the ultimate cinnamon burn." Well, I mean, they jump into it right away. But the first few hours of working on this task is mostly argumentative. They don't even get to the table of, you know, criteria and quality. They're just talking among themselves about what they're looking for about what is quality. They argue

about, you know, taste and sugar in us, and what goes in it. And is there icing on no icing? And how do you judge it. And, you know, they talk about this and wrestle it down. And they actually start to see this diverse perspectives that come in. People, interestingly with other backgrounds say, "Oh, you know, we don't have cinnamon buns in my country. But this is something that's similar." And so you can start to represent the diversity, really a lot comes out in this activity. And it takes them a couple of weeks, at least to the second day before they start creating the table, the rubric table. And then it gets even more complicated because now they have to argue about what's the difference between really tasty and a little bit tasty, and not so tasty. And you realize, you know, they're going to be doing that as they work through creating rubrics for assignments for students as well. And then we get them to look at each other's rubrics. And then, of course, at the very end of the week, I bring in a sample of cinnamon burns, and they get to practice that. And they get to see like, whose rubric work the best or did there's actually work? It's a great activity. But what I here's the thing, imagine instead of cinnamon burns, we did this with, say, all of our alternative assessments or the big ones that matter. So, let's say we did it with a post of the students had to do. Let's put them in groups, let's have them argue, let's look at a bunch of poster assignments, let's give them examples. And they can argue between themselves about what makes good quality, what's most important. And then in the framework of your coaching and facilitation, they have these deep conversations about what it is they're trying to do before they even stop. So, a framework for describing quality based on what they're seeing is actually a great way to build rubrics with students. So, what we're going to do, if I just jump into the next slide, we're going to put you in breakout rooms.

And you're going to go into groups of about four or five. So, spend the first minute or so just introducing each other and seeing where you're from. And then maybe what discipline you're from as well. And then I'm going to get you to answer this question discuss it, you don't have to answer it exactly. But just as a prompt, talking about that engagement of students to build rubrics to build conversations about quality. And the question is, how can you take an authentic, or alternative assessment, and build the option to show examples or exemplars and student conversation into the process? So, think of that example you've got in your mind or you wrote down. How do you actually find a way to build this into the learning process of the evaluation? So, I'm gonna just ask, Kelsey is gonna throw you all in breakout rooms and I will see you back here in 10 minutes. You will have the question in breakout room. And I hope you have a great conversation.

I think everyone's back. Great. I hope you had a really good conversation. I'm sure there was some wrestling going on there about how to make this work and how to... I'm sure the number one thing that came to mind was something that was mentioned earlier, which is the time issue and how do you fit this in? That sounds all great. But as I'm just going to encourage you, this was one last thing before we move on. Is that time is, this thing should not be seen as an extra? Or like, you've got these assessments and now we're going to do this thing that's going to just make the assessment better. Think of it as a way as building learning into the evaluative process. It is not, I can guarantee. If someone has done it, it is never a waste of time to involve students in having a conversation about work and things they're going to do. It's not about getting a good mark. It's about building or empowering students to, you know, know how to check the boxes better. It's about empowering students with that growth towards experience, expertise, tacit knowledge. And so time well spent. And any of you just did a full one assignment to give it a try, it'd be worth it. So, I'm gonna encourage you with that.



Great, let's get on to the third premise and the other potential way of approaching reliability in your assessments. So, even for experts, marking alternative assessments is fraught. And so I'm going to encourage you to collaborate to calibrate. So, this previous sort of premise was about students and about how you can engage, bring them into the process. But now we're going to address that topic that came up a lot in the chat earlier on about the marking and the fairness and making sure that this is able to be reliable marking. I'm sure you've heard the common refrain from students or each other, or even yourself have, Oh, they're really easy marker. Or, "They're really hard marker." I've actually said about myself. You know, I'm quite proud of myself, because I'm a tough marker. We see these things. I soften stuff and say, "What do we really mean by that." What it tells me is there must be a lot of variability among experts being the instructors. Or even just other people who are interpreting a rubric doesn't even have to be like someone in your field, like a student. So, even experts interpret assignment criteria and descriptions of quality differently from one another. And I'll give you an example. When I published my study out of my doctoral work many years ago, one of the journals that I published in, we had triple-blind peer-review. And if you've published, you'll know the story. One of my blind reviewers said the article, my study was fantastic. Get this to print as soon as possible. Here is a couple of corrections. The second one said, "This is important information, people need to hear it. But there's a bit of work that needs to be done to tighten up the methodology and the lit review." And blah, blah, blah, need. So, is the classic except with major revisions. The third one said "No, this is a terrible article. There's no need for this, it's poorly done. No, reject." So, three experts are reviewing in their field came up with three different things against the same criteria that the editor had given out. And I'm sure you've experienced this. I went with the second one. I think that was the most accurate. The first one was wrong as well, there was a lot more errors than he suggested. But it just shows that it is difficult. So, also when I mark, and I'm going to be perfectly honest, I noticed my own biases and fatigue in practicing grading when I'm working through a bunch of alternative assessments, especially if it's over a span of time, or if I'm doing all at once. And we all know what it feels like when a student emails you after you've submitted, given work back, to ask you if you can meet to discuss how you marked their assignment. This shivers down my spine. Even though I'm going to be ready to defend, you feel like you're going in to defend and you start second-guessing yourself. I know I'm like that, I'm just going to be honest. That's because learning cannot be neatly commodified and specified. And these things are hard. If you go back to it a different time, it suddenly looks different even with a really good rubric. Kind of like the taste of a cinnamon bun thing. You know, like it's difficult day by day. And then you have the issue of becoming a victim to your own rubric and beholden to its rules. I don't know if you've ever experienced that. When you create a great rubric, and then you start using it and then you start hating it. And you're like I can't. Now I'm stuck with it because I gave it to students. So, yeah, this is a difficult thing. So, what's the answer? Well, I'm just going to give you one suggestion, and it's around the topic of collaborating with your peers. And here's my example of how this works. When I was teaching teachers, I used to have like a capstone assignment that I taught three years in a row that I loved. It was a fantastic assignment. It was horrible to mark, but I thought I was doing a pretty good job of it because I had a great rubric. And then on the fourth year, I had a second section and an adjunct instructor came in to teach alongside me. And she wanted to collaborate through the whole thing, which was fantastic. I love collaborating. But then she said, "You know, Nicki, can we mark the capstone? It's a really important assignment, can we mark them together? And I was like, "What?" Then I got a little afraid. But then I was like, "No, I'm gonna give this a go." So, what we did is when they were all handed in at the end of the semester, we picked up the big stack. I think we had 25

each. And we walked over to my house and cracked a few beers in the afternoon, and we spread out in my entire house. And the two of us had one of the richest professional collaborative conversations I've ever had in my career. Where we had work out on the floor, we were like, "This is a good one. Can you show me one of your good ones?" This is one that I think's a bit weaker. What do you have for week one." Let's calibrate our marking." But not just calibrate. If I could go to the next slide, here are the other things that came out of this process.

There was less second-guessing in the end because I could check with her. And then when I handed it back to students, I felt more comfortable with my result because I'd had a conversation with another, yeah, someone who was another instructor. We learned from one another because she had a different approach to teaching slightly. She would say, "This is how I presented this criteria and here's how I help students with it. How did you do it?" We talked about that. We iterated the assessment right then in the moment. Because as we were going, we were like, Is this criteria actually as important as we're saying it is? Now we're looking at the sample of 45, 50 papers or projects. And we were instantly changing and improving our assessment, and our marking criteria right then and there for the next round. It kept us accountable because within four hours we had the whole thing done. It was the end of semester Capstone project, the whole thing. And it was, as I said, super fun, especially my kitchen. Now, this might not be reasonable in your situation. But there are still ways to collaborate. So, you know, you can. I mean, I've been on panels as also less likely in an online environment, but you can certainly sample email, examples of essays or posters, or whatever it is that you're assigning your students, to someone else in the field, who does as well. Find a critical friend and just calibrate your work together and have a conversation about what they're looking for, for quality. This is a fantastic way to also build networking and to improve your profession and take yourself out of your own sort of marking silo. So, that's going to be my next challenge. So, I'm now going to put you back with your colleagues and your peers across this country, and see if there's a way that someone has tried this, something that see if there's a way you can make it work that maybe, you know, you can't get in someone else's kitchen over beer and do it together. But maybe there's a way you can do it electronically, through community learning groups. Can you collaborate to calibrate your assessment?

So, we're going to jump back into our breakout room. And we do have, let's do nine minutes. Just because there's always a 32nd buffer, it will be close to 10 minutes by the time we come back. And then we will finish out when we get back. So, I hope everyone has a great second breakout Room. Thanks, Kelsey.

Excellent. Thanks, everyone. Welcome back, I hope you've had a great conversation. Like, sounds like people talked right to the very last second in their last breakout room. So, hopefully, that was good and you were able to just sort of think about things in a new way. Just to finish off, I just want to go back through the three premises that we talked about, and how validity increases. As validity increases, reliability decreases. And this is important to us because we are aiming for reliable alternative assessments. And we have to take into account that, the reliability piece. And so how do we do that? Well, the best way I know is to involve students as much as possible in the process, get them to be designers of in the conversation about quality and about assessment so that you can actually help them learn towards expertise themselves on that journey. And then, finally, for yourselves to collaborate and to reach out to others and to calibrate into own the fact that we have

our own biases and fatigue when it comes to assessment. And it is not easy, but we want to do it well. So, hopefully, you at least take a couple of one or two things away, and you're thrilled about your own assessment. And just to finish off, what we're going to do is I'm going to ask you on the chat, if you just go to the last slide there, Patrick.

I always end with this. If this is true, if what I said if you sort of buying into it, will now watch. Like, what are we going to do about it? So, if you want, feel free to type into the chat. Or if you want, you can unmute your mic and contribute something or just ask a question. And we'll just take the last minute here, and then Helene is going to wrap up for us. I will just say too... Sorry, I'm interrupting if people are trying to jump in. Bad practice. But I will just say that I'm going to be doing a full week on assessment in March, and there's a FLO micro-course. It's asynchronous. So, it's five days of content that you can consume at your own time. And there's discussion forum, so it is interactive. And there'll be two live sessions on the Tuesday and the Friday for an hour. So, you can feel free to join or not join, and maybe Helena will talk more about what's available. So, I'm just gonna look at the chat. And if anyone wants to unmute and say anything, we've got a minute or so. Helena just put the information about the micro-course. Show don't tell. Excellent. Thanks, Tracy. Shout out. Creating class rubrics. Yeah, it's hard work. Get pay off the huge payoff. Helps students generate ideas about what constitutes high quality. Yeah. And show them examples. Like, put it, I always say another good thing is to give them a bunch of examples and say, How would you rank these and why? And that's a really good way to start the process of building quality rubrics with students. Excellent learning. Great. Well, thanks, everyone. Helena, it's right at the top of the hour. So, I'll hand over to you to close this out. And I really appreciate everyone being here, and I'm going to now start my day at very early hours of the day.

HELENA PRINS:

Yeah. You go back to bed, Nicki, thank you, everyone. We're going to drop there in the chat for you a few upcoming events that I just want to highlight because they're great. We have a couple of hours of registration still open for our FLO UDL. That's the next two weeks, with Dr Carrie Klein, Internal Goal. If you're new to this FLO environment, I would highly recommend that course. We also have a FLO lab for three hours. It's a whole-body learning of the wonderful Beth Kugler Blom and Valyria Cortez. So, if you're up for that, it happens early March, March 2, and the link is in chat. And then we have a two-part series coming March 24 and 31st on student teams, how to coach student teams. If you're a faculty member, you know how difficult teamwork can be at times. And I think the facilitators will really help you unpack some of that and give you some strategies. And then finally, we put a link in here for a survey. We will also email that out. It's a very short survey just to get feedback, not just me and Nicki's session. But as I plan the next year ahead, new fiscal starting, what are the professional development topics you want us to explore? We really value your input in that as we plan for the year ahead. And I am so glad that you chose to join this wonderful hour of me and Nicki. You're amazing. I'm very inspired by the content of today's topic, and I can see from the chat that people have definitely taken something big away. So, we send you off into this wonderful long weekend. Have fun, wherever you are enjoy. And we look forward to the next FLO Friday coming up probably then in April. Excellent.

NICKI REHN:

Thanks, everyone.

