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Fall 9-16-2022

Implementing virtual assessments in an undergraduate physiology course

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Recommended Citation

Borg, S., & Milne, K. J. (2022). Implementing virtual assessments in an undergraduate physiology course. Retrieved from <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/133>

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Implementing virtual assessments in an undergraduate physiology course

Government and institutional responses to the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on education and the ability of instructors to plan and provide an effective and engaging course experience in every discipline. Although distance education infrastructure was in place or quickly developed during the first year of the pandemic at most institutions, there were several obstacles to its effective use, such as a lack of preparation time, teacher/student isolation, and the need for evidence-based pedagogical approaches. It is important to identify the successes and failures of the adaptations made by instructors to determine how to better support students.

PURPOSE: To better understand undergraduate university students' perception of virtual physiology assessments during the COVID-19 pandemic. **METHODS:** 30 undergraduate students completed an online Qualtrics survey that collected quantitative and qualitative information regarding their experience with virtual physiology assessment. **RESULTS:** This study identified that virtual assessments were an effective and enjoyable format of learning, although students who had taken university in-person labs, generally rated them as more effective. Aspects of these assessments, such as the audio tutorials, self-paced manner, and ability to repeat an exercise, were well received by the respondents. Furthermore, low-pressure assessments were perceived as the best assessment format to help students reflect on and apply course material. **CONCLUSION:** This study provides valuable information about student preferences and pedagogical approaches to effectively provide physiology assessment course content in a virtual format.