# Oral Assessments: Building a Community of Statistical Thinkers and Speakers

## Abstract

Oral assessments provide educators with a wealth of information about student understanding. Rather than deciphering a static written response, oral assessments allow instructors to probe student understanding, providing a more complete picture of their overall understanding. However, the time and energy required to incorporate oral assessments in the classroom may cause many educators to shy away. In this session, we will describe two ways in which oral exams can be incorporated into the statistics classroom. We will outline the necessary considerations when designing and implementing these assessments, and reflections from our experiences. Throughout the session participants will apply the discussions to an assessment setting of their choice, leaving with an outline for implementing their assessment.

## Goals

In our session, we have two main goals, (1) to breakdown the barriers for instructors interested in incorporating oral exams in the classroom, and (2) to facilitate instructors designing oral assessments for a specific course.

The presentations during this session will provide two possible methods for incorporating oral assessments in the classroom, one as a follow-up to homework assignment(s) and the other as midterm and/or final exams. During these presentations, we will describe the components that are instrumental to designing oral assessments (e.g. design, facilitation, grading), describe how we approached each component, and recommendations we would make.

There will be moments for reflection throughout each presentation. Attendees will be given opportunities to consider how they would apply each component to design an oral assessment for their course. Following the presentations, the session will combine these design components into a cohesive oral assessment. Participants will work in pairs (or groups) to give feedback on their assessment designs.

## Connection to Theme

Oral assessments provide an alternative method for students to demonstrate their understanding. Outside of the confines of written responses, students can articulate their understanding in a way that is genuine to them. We believe this flexibility promotes equity and increases student achievement. Moreover, when paired with a classroom emphasizing a growth mindset and student’s mastery of the material, these assessments increase student engagement and participation.

## Engagement

Activities will be interspersed throughout the session’s presentations. These activities will walk participants through the necessary stages in designing oral assessments. These activities will be facilitated through breakout rooms, so participants can connect and engage with fellow attendees. Additionally, the session will conclude with participants assembling each component of their assessment into a cohesive set and receiving feedback from their partners.

## Technology

No technology other than Zoom will be necessary.