

ASCILITE 2025

Future-Focused:

Educating in an Era of Continuous Change

Reimagining assessment: Interactive oral assessments as authentic, integrity-rich alternatives to traditional evaluation methods

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Higher education faces unprecedented assessment challenges from emerging technologies and academic misconduct. Interactive oral assessments (IOAs) provide a viable solution as real-time, dialogic assessments where students demonstrate understanding, critical thinking, and communication skills through two-way spoken interaction. This assessment type strengthens academic integrity while improving student engagement and learning outcomes.

This panel showcases IOA implementation across diverse contexts—biological and health sciences, clinical training, business education, and creative arts—spanning all undergraduate years with varied formats. Our collective experience covers cohorts from 20 to 600+ students, delivered in-person and online.

The panel addresses practical implementation challenges: scheduling, staffing, technological requirements, consistency, accessibility, student preparedness, and anxiety management. Attendees will participate in hands-on IOA activities, share experiences, and gain concrete implementation strategies while building connections with fellow educators exploring assessment innovation.

Keywords: interactive oral assessment, authentic assessment, academic integrity, student engagement, assessment innovation

Context and Session Design

The rapid emergence of generative artificial intelligence and persistent challenges with contract cheating have fundamentally disrupted traditional assessment paradigms in higher education, demanding innovative approaches that preserve academic integrity while enhancing authentic learning (Moorhouse et al., 2023; Nallaya et al., 2024; Davey et al., 2025). This panel provides an opportunity to hear from educators who have successfully implemented interactive oral assessments (IOA) across varied contexts, course sizes, modalities and assessment purposes to explore their transformative potential in contemporary tertiary education. With assessment integrity under unprecedented pressure, IOA offer immediate solutions that institutions can implement across disciplines and scales.

Interactive oral assessments allow students to demonstrate understanding, critical thinking, and communication skills through spoken interaction. These assessments are dialogic, involving two-way communication between peers and/or assessors, conducted in real-time, and mirror authentic real-world communication contexts (Sotiriadou et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2022; Ward et al., 2023). Our panel represents implementation experiences spanning biological and health sciences, clinical practice, business, and creative disciplines. Course enrolments range from intimate cohorts of 20 students to large-scale offerings of 600+ students, conducted in person and online. We have deployed IOA in multiple formats including replacements for written examinations, laboratory skill assessments, written reports, defence of written work, as a part of a progressive assessment, clinical scenario evaluations, professional simulations, and individual components within group tasks.

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This panel will challenge traditional assessment assumptions by presenting evidence-based outcomes demonstrating significant improvements in student performance, engagement, and satisfaction following IOA implementation. We will address critical implementation considerations including equity concerns for diverse student populations, particularly English as Additional Language learners, anxiety management strategies, and practical logistics for different class sizes. The panel will explore how IOA naturally resist academic misconduct while providing immediate formative feedback opportunities that enhance deep learning.

The session will demonstrate how IOA align with authentic assessment principles by simulating real-world professional contexts where graduates must articulate complex concepts, defend decisions, and engage in meaningful dialogue. Through examining varied disciplinary applications, we will illustrate the adaptability and scalability of IOA across different educational contexts while maintaining academic rigor and consistency.

Our interactive format will model IOA principles through dynamic audience engagement, moving beyond traditional presentation modes to facilitate genuine dialogue about assessment innovation. The robust Q&A component will be structured as an IOA experience, allowing participants to experience firsthand the assessment format while exploring implementation strategies, addressing concerns, and identifying opportunities for adoption within their own teaching contexts.

Session Format and Engagement Strategies

- **Opening (5 minutes):** Contextual overview of contemporary assessment challenges and IOA potential
- **Panel presentations (20 minutes):** Disciplinary perspectives on implementation, outcomes, and lessons learned
- **Interactive IOA demonstration (20 minutes):** Audience participation in structured IOA-style dialogue
- **Q&A and synthesis (10 minutes):** Collaborative exploration of implementation strategies and future directions

Intended Outcomes

Participants will gain practical frameworks for IOA implementation, evidence-based understanding of student and educator benefits, and strategies for addressing common challenges. The session aims to catalyse broader IOA adoption as a viable, scalable alternative to traditional assessment methods while building a community of practice where both newcomers and experienced practitioners can share challenges, seek guidance, and collaborate on innovative assessment design that enhances academic integrity and authentic learning.

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