Test Design Tips for Instructors

Blackboard Learn

Question Creation Methods

- [Create questions](#) using the pre-set question types. To create self-scoring tests, use objective question formats: [multiple choice](#), [multiple answer](#), [matching](#), [true-false](#), [fill in the blank](#), [ordering](#), or [hot spot](#).

- Or, [create a pool file from a Word document](#), then [build a test from the pool](#).

- If a textbook publisher offers downloadable test banks, look for test or pool *export files* that are meant to be [imported](#) in Blackboard 7 or higher. After importing questions, always review their answer and scoring options.

- Never copy and paste questions directly from a Word document or web page into Blackboard! This often results in copying hidden HTML code that could cause unpredictable technical issues.

Test Length

Compose tests to contain no more than 50-60 questions. If a test is longer than 60 questions or designed to take more than one hour to complete, divide the test into a few smaller tests. This helps reduce risks associated with long test sessions, such as session time-outs due to inactivity or dropped Wi-Fi signals.

Test Options Settings

- Set [Test Presentation](#) to *All at Once* so that the student will see all test questions on the same page. This improves the student's navigation through the test.

- If you select *Force Complete,* the student can only open the test one time. If the student experiences a technical problem or exits the test without submitting it, the student will not be able to resume the test. You may be contacted by the student to [clear the test attempt](#) so that they can try again.

- The [feedback](#) options that you choose to display for a test will be available to students for the duration of the course through the *[My Grades](#)* tool. If you do not want students to see test questions or answers in their feedback, only select *Score per Question*. You may make changes to *[Test Options](#)* feedback settings at any time.

Discourage Cheating through Test Design

- Develop tests using large [question pools](#) containing at least 100 questions and [random blocks](#). This ensures that no two students have the same questions and order of questions.

- Update your tests or question pools each time you teach the course so that tests are different each time.

- To reduce pressure to cheat, consider making tests worth a lower point value in the course or allow multiple attempts.

- When [making a test available](#), set the test's availability for an entire week but set a tight time-frame for completing a test once it is opened through the *Timer* and *Auto-Submit* Test Options. Depending on question complexity, a good rule of thumb for calculating needed time for completion is 1 minute per question.

- Schedule when answer feedback becomes available through *[Test Options](#)*.

References

Chiesl, N. (2009). Pragmatic methods to reduce dishonesty in web-based courses. In A. Orellana, T. Hudgins, and M. Simonson (Eds.),*The perfect online course* (pp. 327-339). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.