Tests & Quizzes: Top Faculty Gotchas

1. Editing a Published Assessment

ISSUE: Once an assessment has been published and a student has started it, you can't edit the content but you can change the settings.

BEST PRACTICE: Create your assessment with plenty of lead time. Use a project site and a guest account to take your own test (or work with a TA or colleague) and identify any problems before publishing.

2. Immediate Feedback is Immediate

ISSUE: If you select "Immediate Feedback," students can see the answer key during the exam!

BEST PRACTICE: Planned feedback timeframes are critical in online assessments. For most regular assessments, choose "No Feedback will be displayed to the student" OR "Feedback… on a specific date" to account for any possible student make-ups during the assessment window. You can always readjust the settings to display feedback accordingly once all students have taken the assessment or you can always discuss the answers verbally in class. For practice assessments, choose "Feedback on submission."

3. "Student Response" is a Prerequisite for Other Feedback Options

ISSUE: If you don't select at least "Student Response," then the "Question-Level Feedback," "Selection-Level Feedback," and "Grader's Comments" feedback options will not appear properly.

BEST PRACTICE: Be sure to select: "Student Response," "Correct Response," "Student's Assessment Scores," and "Student's Question and Part Scores" so that students can learn from their mistakes. If you don't want students to see the questions at all, choose "Only Release Student's Assessment Scores (questions not shown)."

4. Where are the Images?

ISSUE: Students claim they can't see the images in the assessment, or they can see the images in Resources before the exam!

BEST PRACTICE: Where you place the images is an important decision. You don't want to give away exam questions, so don't place them in Resources of the class site. Instead, we recommend that you store them in your personal "My Workspace" Resources. Put them in a folder named "Images" and make that folder "publicly viewable." Don't worry, only people with the link to the images can see them. For questions, reach out to techlearn@pepperdine.edu!

5. One Question Per Page

ISSUE: Students claim they started the assessment but their work was lost!

BEST PRACTICE: Don't select "The complete Assessment is displayed on one web page." Instead, select either "Each Question is on a separate Web page" or "Each Part is on a separate Web page." Encourage students to save their work often.

6. What if students receive the same questions and answers?

ISSUE: You want to minimize cheating by randomizing answers or questions.

BEST PRACTICE: Edit the "Part" to randomize the order of the questions. Edit the question to randomize answers within a question. Matching questions are auto-scrambled. You can also use test question banks (called "question pools" in Courses) to create random-draw exams. This strategy will ensure that each student receives a unique set of test questions.

7. Changing Settings with Gradebook
ISSUE: I want to change the feedback settings after an exam has been published and administered, but it gives me an error.
BEST PRACTICE: If you have linked the scores to the Gradebook, then the system is trying to help you by not overwriting an existing Gradebook item. Simply go to "About this Assessment" and edit the name of the assessment (e.g. "Quiz 1" becomes "Quiz 1a"). Now, you can save the change.

8. Don't Forget the Points!
ISSUE: I created my questions but forgot to add point values. I now have an assessment worth zero points!
BEST PRACTICE: It's easy to overlook the points field. It's very important to take your own assessment before you release it to students (see Gotcha #1). Be sure to review the "points" area next to each question as well as the total points at the top of the main assessment builder screen.

9. Scoring for Multiple Correct Answers
ISSUE: Students are losing points if they select an incorrect option!
BEST PRACTICE: That's good design, as it will reward correct answers and penalize incorrect guesses. If you are not comfortable with this, consider changing to a "single correct" multiple choice item or multiple true/false items.

10. Avoiding Student Panic with Essays
ISSUE: After a student finishes an exam, the auto-grade shows that they failed!
BEST PRACTICE: Essays must be graded by instructors. Before an assessment, be clear with students that their initial score will not reflect graded items like essay, file upload, etc. Again, remind students to SAVE OFTEN during an essay. They may want to write the essay in Microsoft Word (and save it regularly) and then paste into the browser exam. That way, if they accidentally close the exam window, they will not lose their work.

11. Assessment Exceptions and Extended Time
ISSUE: I need to administer my assessment in ways that accommodate different students!
BEST PRACTICE: If you have students that need extended time, or students who need to make-up a missed assessment, you can utilize the "Exceptions to Time Limit and Delivery Date" feature in the published assessment's settings.

12. Audio Questions Not Recommended
ISSUE: Students have problems recording audio responses to audio questions.
BEST PRACTICE: This question type is a good concept, but difficult across multiple browsers and systems. At this time, we don't recommend using this question type.

13. Time Zones and Daylight Savings Changes
ISSUE: My students all live within different time zones!
BEST PRACTICE: It is common for students to take assessments from different US states or countries. State in your syllabus and communicate elsewhere as appropriate that all assessments and activities are anchored to a particular state/country time. This shifts the responsibility to the student to make any necessary time conversions. Also avoid scheduling assessment deadlines over periods of daylight savings time (DST) changes.

14. Student Test Taking Tips
ISSUE: Some of my students don't have any experience taking online assessments!
BEST PRACTICE: Advising your students of best practices prior to taking an online assessment will prepare them for success. Before the day of the assessment, recommend to students that they read "Test Taking Tips" by expanding the "Tests & Quizzes Tool" category online: http://bit.ly/coursestesttips.