

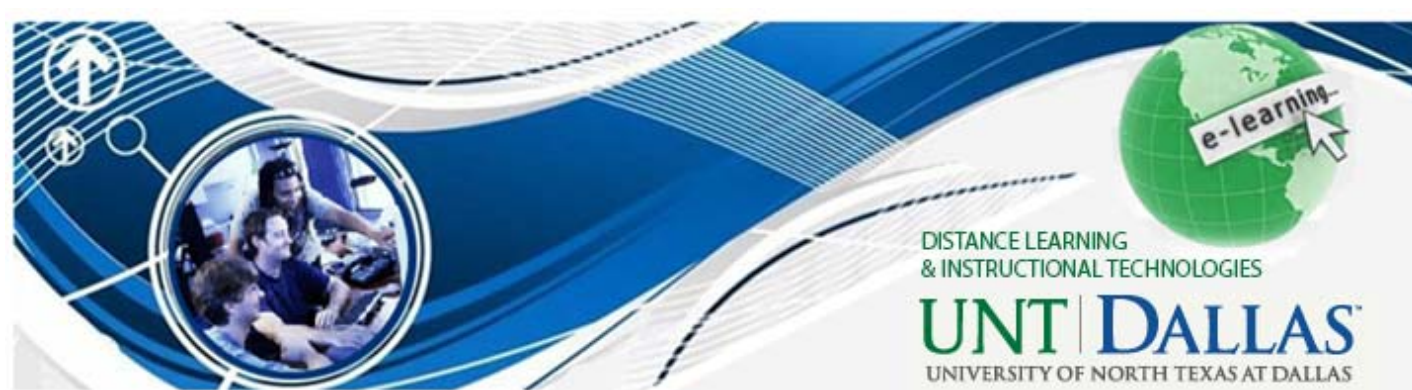
Student Experience Tips

Time Frame: Provide a reasonable time frame for students to take the test. It is recommended that you provide at least a 24 hour time frame.

Students could experience errors or other problems if all your students are hitting the server at the same time for the same test. This recommendation also applies to requiring students to take the online test all at the same time in a lab setting.

System Requirements: In terms of system requirements, Google Chrome and Firefox has been a more reliable browser when using Blackboard. It is recommended that you convey this to students and suggest they use Firefox for test taking. In addition, you can recommend students with internet trouble to take the test on campus.

Time Outs and Server Limits: The Blackboard server reserves a certain amount of memory for assessment features. Because this memory is "limited," the servers will time out after 20 minutes. If it detects no activity while taking a test, the student may experience being "kicked out of the test." To avoid this problem, it is recommended you keep exam time under 1 hour. When giving a final or other long test, break the test into multiple shorter sections. For example, create two assessments of 50 questions or less and a separate exam for essay questions. For essay exams it is recommended to not require over 20 minutes for each response to avoid timeout issues. Alternative options may be to use the File Response question type and ask students to compose their essay in a word processing program and then attach the file. Using the Assignment Manager with time and date restrictions is also another method for essay exams. Train students to save their exam every 15 minutes or so; this will help prevent test loss if an issue does occur.



Recommendations for Instructors doing Online testing:

- In the Announcements, if Instructors will add a course link, students will have no difficulty finding the quiz. Otherwise, finding the Quiz can be a problem. Remember to add a Course Link to the Test in your announcement.
- Demonstrate in your class how to take a test. Students might have practice taking an online test.
- Let students know the timeline students need to follow - when test will be available, and deadlines for submission.
- Use monitoring tools in Blackboard to track student activity or lack thereof. Monitor the amount of time a student is working within the class and let them know if you notice a change in behavior.

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies

Web: <http://www.untdallas.edu/dlit>

Phone: 972-338-5580

Email: UNTDDistance@unt.edu

Best Practices and Tips for Creating and Deploying Tests on Blackboard

Blackboard's Test features provide a basic method to build online tests using different question types, the ability to import question pools, and the ability to manage certain testing and feedback options. Blackboard separates the processes of creating and deploying a test into two different stages. The following tips and recommendations are made for test creation and test deployment (items such as test availability and test presentation) to assist in minimizing common problems.

Building Your Online Test

1. Familiarize yourself with the various options that apply to each question type that you plan to use in your test. For example, some question types allow you to randomize answers, and some provide for possible partial credit for selected answers. Understanding the available options and their implications for grading the questions will help avoid confusion and issues for you and your students.



- To help your students identify and solve technical issues before actual on-line tests begin, prepare a **practice on-line test**. Make the practice test as similar as possible in the settings and types of questions you will use in graded tests. You might even include questions about the online testing environment itself to reinforce student best practices. Make it a requirement for your students to take the practice test in the same location and circumstances they plan to take the graded tests. Have them report any problems or issues that they encounter while taking the practice test to you.
- After you create an on-line test and have selected deployment options, **take the test yourself as a student**. Be sure to try your exam to be certain the exam is displayed as it's supposed. This serves two important purposes:
First, if you don't make a perfect score on your own test, you should check the questions missed to ensure that the correct answers are indicated.
Second, you will be sure that all your questions display properly in the browser. If possible, take your entire test using more than one of the supported browsers. This is especially important if you copy and paste text into your test questions and/or answers (see Step 4 below), embed images or special characters in the test editor, or use an equation editor in composing the test.
- When creating questions, copying text from Word documents or other formatted sources can create problems when "unseen" formatting codes are carried over with the visible text. Such codes can interfere with the proper display of questions and answers when students take the test. If text needs to be copied into tests, use a text editor such as Notepad as an intermediate step.



- Once students have begun taking a test you should not make changes in the test other than to correct typographical mistakes. Other changes will create inconsistencies in grading and can even corrupt the test to make it inaccessible by other students.

Recommended Setting for Test Options

- Note that regardless of any release dates or timer settings you select, you must also select the Yes radio button for **Make the link available**. This is what makes the link for the test available to students.
- Unless this is a practice test in which the instructor will not view the grades, *do not* select the checkbox to Hide Results for this Test Completely from Instructor and the Grade Center. If you choose later to view the students' test attempts, changing this option will automatically delete all previous "practice" attempts.
- You have the option to have test questions presented to students **All at Once** or **One at a Time**. Our recommendation is to select the One at a Time option. This option requires the student to save each answer as they move from one question to the next. This can help a student avoid losing their work if their test session is interrupted.
- Unless you need to have the students see their test in a new, separate browser window, select the **No** radio button for **Open in New Window**. If you select the **Yes** radio button for this option, inform your students that they should disable all pop-up blockers on their browser before starting the test.

Academic Dishonesty

There is no guaranteed method of preventing cheating when giving online exams. Requiring students to take a proctored mid-term and final exam is one method to discourage academic dishonesty but there are alternate methods, which might be more helpful for online education. In addition to including the University's Statement on Academic Dishonesty on your course syllabus, the following considerations are intended to provide you some practical ideas on discouraging dishonesty:

- Consider drafting a Code of Honor contract for students to sign. Clearly define academically inappropriate behavior, your expectations for students, and identify reasons to be honest.
- Vary the type of assessments used throughout the class making it difficult for students to get constant help.
- Design discussion and test questions that cannot be answered easily unless the individual has done previous work in the course.
- Use several short quizzes rather than one or two tests to discourage getting help with testing.
- Design open book test questions that require students to demonstrate their understanding rather than simple 'hunt' for the correct answer.
- Require that term papers and other assignments be submitted in stages (outline, introduction, rough draft, etc.). Ask students to submit an actual source, or the first page of each source for their paper. Make it a common practice to ask students questions about their paper. Students will be more cautious if they know their instructor will be asking question about their sources.