

Cheating

Prevention Strategies

How many teachers have thought “If that student would put as much effort into studying or completing assignments as he does finding ways to cheat, he wouldn’t need to cheat!” But there are a variety of reasons why students cheat in the first place, so being proactive in your exam creation efforts may be better focused in prevention strategies. The following tips were gathered with a focus on online exams, but could certainly be applied to paper-based, face-to-face exams as well.

MULTIPLE VERSIONS

Create multiple versions of exams so that students in the same class aren’t getting the same exam. If you are teaching two sections of the course, make sure students in each section are getting slightly different exams. Create new exams each semester so that exams don’t get passed around and shared by students who took your course in a previous semester.

RANDOMIZE THE QUESTIONS

Change the order in which the questions are placed on the exam. Or better yet, create pools of potential questions that can be drawn from randomly, so students are getting completely different exams. You can also randomize the order in which answer options are displayed if you use multiple choice or true/false type questions.

VARY QUESTION TYPE

Don’t rely solely on one question type. Incorporate a variety of types to get a better idea of student understanding. Consider creating a question using a video or audio clip. If for some reason your exam does get printed and copied, or screenshots are made of the questions, the question will be hard to capture if it is a video clip.



EXAM DESIGN

- Create several different opportunities for assessment instead of relying solely on a mid-term and final.
- If you do use exams, administer more frequent, short exams and don’t rely on the results of one or two long unit exams.
- Pose questions that require higher order thinking and require understanding and mastery of material, rather than questions with rote answers.
- Ask students to answer questions using their personal experience or require examples from the “real-world” to support the question’s answer.
- Ask off-site students to find a proctor to monitor the exam. See UAF eLearning’s proctor process as an example. <http://elearning.uaf.edu/students/exams/>.

CHANGE HOW YOU ASSESS

When it comes down to it, consider if your exams are really a good way to test students of their understanding. Would some kind of end of course or unit project show more understanding? How about if each student took responsibility for leading a discussion or “teaching” a lesson where a presentation was made to your and class? Is there another method that might prove a better assessment?