BEST PRACTICES FOR TESTING IN ONLINE AND HYBRID COURSES

Karen McPhaul

Durham Technical Community College

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Concerns with Online Testing

- Students can encounter technical glitches, which can lock them out of tests (Bb) and/or cause their answers to be lost (Bb or Sakai)
- Students can use notes, books, web sites, etc or get assistance from others
- Students can have others take tests for them
- Students can print/copy/capture the test and share it with others

Technical Tips for Instructors

- Select test options wisely
  - #1 Tip: Display questions "one at a time"
  - #2 Tip: Set a time limit
- Use randomization options
  - Randomize questions
  - Randomize answers
  - Select random blocks of questions from test pools
- Give a low-stakes practice quiz before test time
- Direct students to tips for avoiding problems

For detailed instructions, see the Technical Tips handouts

Other (non-technical) suggestions

- Treat all tests as open book

- Use a variety of assignments (discussion forums, projects, etc) that require application of knowledge and incorporation of personal experience

- Adjust course grading policies to emphasize assignments that are less susceptible to cheating

- Educate students about academic honesty policies and post frequent reminders

- Consider in-person, proctored final exams

Your ideas…

- What kinds of assignments or assessments have you used (or can you think of) that don't lend themselves to cheating?

- In what situations are traditional tests useful (or needed)?

Federal law and SACS requirements

The 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act directs accrediting agencies to require institutions to…

"have processes through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit"

At this time, acceptable methods of verifying the identity of online students may include:

- "a secure login and pass code"
- "proctored exams" or
- "new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity"

New technological solutions

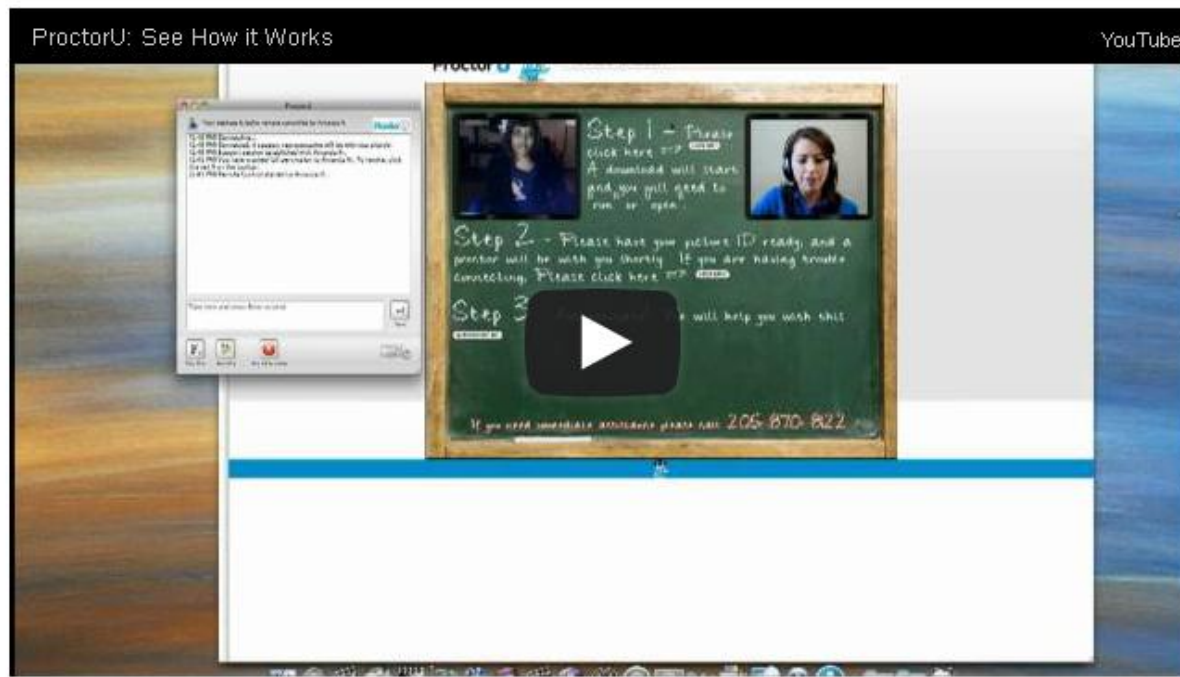MOOCs (massive open online courses) are driving experimentation with a variety of new technologies, such as…

- Monitoring students by web cam
  (View a short [demo video](#) or [two](#))

- Keystroke analysis

- Fingerprint or palm vein scans

- Devices that lock down the student's computer while taking a test

For more info, see [Keeping an Eye on Online Test-Takers](#) (NY Times, 3/3/2013)

Example of webcam monitoring

Proctor U sales video:

Can technology solve it?

"Every time we figure out a mechanical means to prevent cheating, students find a way to get around it. They're often more motivated than we are… Our time would be better spent trying to help students develop their skills to make well-reasoned, ethical decisions. I know that I want my role in the university to be one in which I educate rather than police."

-- Teddi Fishman, director of Clemson's Center for Academic Integrity (and a former police officer), quoted in <u>Technologies May Curb Cheating</u> (U.S. News & World Report, 8/19/2011)

For more info

Online Testing: Best Practices from the Field (NC Conference of English Instructors)

http://www.nccei.org/blackboard/testingadvice.html

Ways to Prevent Cheating on Online Exams (eCollege/Pearson)

http://www.ecollege.com/Newsletter/EducatorsVoice/EducatorsVoice-Vol8Iss6.learn

Best Practices for Quizzes and Tests (Cape Fear CC)

http://cfcc.edu/blogs/DL/2010/01/25/best-practices-for-quizzes-and-tests/

Online Educators Won't Have to Spy on Students (Chronicle of Higher Ed)

http://chronicle.com/article/Online-Educators-Wont-Have/47291/