

Blackboard Quizzes

Why use quizzes?



Blackboard comes with a large range of quizzes that can populate your module. But why? This guide will go through some of the benefits of using quizzes for distance delivery, and discuss some hints and tips to help you get the most out of this aspect of a module.

Quizzes allow students to:

- **Gain confidence in themselves and their study – help those who have been away from education**
- **Check progress at their own pace**
- **Get automated feedback – and give students the opportunity to feed forward to the next level**
- **Experience a wide range of question types**
- **Get random question sets**
- **Work under pressure**

Confidence



A quiz doesn't have to be the most complex, thought provoking element in your module. The quiz can be almost deliberately straightforward. This can have the effect of giving students a bit of confidence in what they are trying to do. The typical demographic for distance students indicates that many have been out of education for some time. Therefore, they might need a bit of a booster to get them up to speed. Popping a quick quiz into your module could have the desired effect of giving them that boost to allow them to see that they can succeed.

As the course develops, the quizzes can be made more complicated. In a way you are scaffolding the students learning experience. As the student's confidence increases, you remove that scaffolding and make the quizzes more involved.

Progress



Quizzes can be used at set points during delivery. If the content is to be delivered in a slightly less linear fashion you might want to build in progress checks. In other words, a quiz has to be completed and passed before the student can progress to the next level. Blackboard allows for this using an approach called Adaptive Release. By using adaptive release content is not released until a certain rule or condition is met. This might be especially useful if content is delivered in a way that concepts are built up. Without prior knowledge of one topic, the student might struggle. Therefore, they can only progress once they have successfully completed the end of section quiz.

As we can programme all this into a module, it removes some of the necessity for you the tutor to manage student progress. Blackboard maintains a record of each and every quiz you create, allowing you the opportunity to see at a glance who has completed which quiz. In fact, you can look at each quiz results and see if there is a particular problem area that all students seem to struggle with.

Feedback



Possibly one of the most powerful features of quizzes is the ability to create feedback. With a bit of thought and effort, a quiz can be built with rich feedback. This feedback can be developed to include not only text but images, hyperlinks, videos and pretty much any kind of media content you can think of.

Rather than a rather basic "Correct/Incorrect" approach, feedback can be tailored to deliver a more personal approach. This can feed students forward (to coin a phrase from Phil Race) to further their study, or help them identify where they might need to look further.

Let's look at a specific example. You might set a true/false question type. The right answer might give a simple response such as "Correct" or "Well done" or even something more personal like "Great work – keep it up!". But it could also be an opportunity to say something like "That's correct. You might want to read more in such and such a book for a more in depth discussion about this topic". Similarly, a wrong response can be tailored to have equally meaningful feedback. Rather than a terse "Wrong" you could use feedback like "That's not quite right – try reading chapters 3 and 4 to get a hint" or "You're almost correct but review the previous session to find out where you've gone wrong". So rather than spoon feeding the information, you are directing students to further study and ideally developing a deeper knowledge of the subject.

Another advantage is that feedback is automated. Once you have created the quiz, the system will take care of the rest and chug away in the background. Students can then take the ownership and autonomy of their own learning experience and progress as appropriate to their needs.

Question Types



As this is not a technical document, we'll not cover every type of question type that comes in Blackboard. However, a quick exploration will show you that there are many different types of questions you could use.

From true/false questions to short answers there's probably a question type for your needs. You can create Hot Spot quizzes (where students identify parts of an image) for a more visual approach. There are ordered lists that students need to sort into a particular order. A common favourite is a multiple choice approach. As mentioned above, with careful feedback, these can create a rich and engaging method to move your students forward.

We talked about rich media in feedback. The same goes for the questions themselves. You could include a video link and ask a question based on that video. You might want to include images in your question and ask a question about the image. Or you might just want to use an image to re-iterate your question. By making the quiz more visually appealing is almost certainly going to keep the student's interest levels high.

By developing quizzes with a variety of question types could go some way to eliminate any boredom of being presented with a long list of True/False questions or random clicking of answers just to finish the quiz. By breaking up the quiz into new question types you are more likely to maintain the interest and concentration of students.

Random Questions



As a module leader you can build up *pools* of questions. By using some more advanced techniques you can create a pool of questions that Blackboard can randomly select. This can give a great deal of diversity to your quizzes.

If the purpose of the quiz is a knowledge check, then students can take the same test at different times and get different questions to test themselves. As the questions are selected at random there will be times when they get the same question again. But if you build a large pool of questions, then this eventuality is minimised.

Another option that comes with quizzes is to display the same questions but in a random fashion. This can then help towards stopping purely rote learning and make students think more about the questions.

Working under Pressure



Quizzes in Blackboard can be created so they are timed. This allows students the experience of a real time quiz. It may be that the students who are working at a distance may need to take an actual examination – which will most likely be under time constraints. If they have been studying at a distance they might be used to working at their own pace. By imposing a time limit you can give them opportunities to practice working at speed.

Conclusion

Creating a good quiz can take some effort. However, if you already use quizzes in your classrooms (even if it's a simple pop quiz at the start of class) you can build up a quiz. Quizzes can be exported from a module and imported elsewhere and are thus re-usable elements. The amount of automated feedback and response they provide can give students a more engaging experience in their studies.

Get in touch with the eLearning team to talk in more detail about setting up quizzes in your module and we'll work with you to take your module forward.