Digital Excellence Impact Case Studies

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Tests in Blackboard Ultra for Summative Assessment

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Experience of using tests on Blackboard Ultra for summative assessment

With the recent launch of a dietetic undergraduate degree via the apprenticeship route, the team made the decision to include both multiple choice question (MCQ) tests and short answer question tests for the summative assessment of the level 4 modules.

Both tests were quick and easy to set up by selecting 'Create' and choosing 'Test' under the Assessment selection from the pop-up menu.

We made the decision to take the time to set up the test in a Sandbox module as a pilot. This allowed us to do some testing with the various options available in Blackboard Ultra. Within the module, there is the option to access the Analytics panel. As well as providing statistics on Module Activity, it also provides a 'Question Analysis'. This lets you run reports on any assessments within your

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module. Running the report on the 'Question Analysis' allowed us to notice a number of potential issues, including an indication of perceived difficulty of questions set, and questions that may merit a review. When you select to Run Report, you are then sent an email when the report is completed, and you can check the results from the Question Analysis panel.

This then broke down the test, and gives you an idea of the "Difficulty" of each question. So, where questions are deemed easy, review is prompted and changing to 'choose one or multiple correct answers' may offer a way of improving discrimination (how well questions differentiate between learner ability). Not all questions will merit a review where you want learners to have a mix of difficulty in questions asked. However, a high 'average score' alongside a high number of 'easy' questions prompted a discussion with the module team.

Where questions were ambiguous due to choosing to randomly order the answers (as part of test set up), this question analysis

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helpfully prompted correction, i.e. where one of MCQ answers was 'all of the above' and it no longer made sense when re-ordered to top of the choices.

Another function of the question analysis is 'average time spent' which guided appropriateness of number of questions set. Many of the above functions within this question analysis report were more helpful when re-run after a body of learners had undertaken the test.

Finally getting the test settings right was important to a seamless process and positive experience for both learners and tutors. On first run of the MCQ test, a number of learners received a 'late' submission message (albeit within 1 minute of the due date and time set). Here the test was set to automatically submit after the time limit (60 minutes) and the end time was set as exactly 60 minutes following the start time e.g. 10am start and 11am finish.

This late alert message was alleviated for the following test (short answer) by setting the due date and time for 24 hours following the recommended test start time. Here the learner's attempt still automatically submitted when time limit expired but offered some flexibility in start time.

SUMMARY

Embracing tests as a new way of assessment within our dietetics provision has been positively received by tutors and learners. Going forward into the next instances we have tests which are fit for purpose and a great platform to build on. Creating a question bank would offer us options for formative learning in addition to choice for summative tests.

Contact Information

For more information or to explore the use of interactive tools in education, please contact the Digital Development Team at elearning@tees.ac.uk.