
ENHANCING MULTIPLE CHOICE EXAMS

TIPS TO DISCOURAGE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

1. USE QUESTION GROUPS

Question groups allow you to pick a limited number of questions from a larger group. This means that no two students have the same exam. With enough questions, this makes sharing exam questions between students less useful and discourages the practice.

2. REDUCE THEIR IMPACT

Having large, high-impact multiple-choice exams is a recipe for encouraging academic dishonesty. Reducing the weight of multiple-choice exams on a student's final grade is a great defense against cheating.

3. SPLIT THEM UP

Having smaller, lower impact exams allows the student to recover from an early failure and reduces the stakes of any individual exam. This is especially the case if some of them allow multiple attempts; while not always appropriate, it is a great option at reducing a student's desire to cheat.

4. ASK THE SAME QUESTIONS, BUT ASK FOR RATIONALE

Giving a group of multiple-choice questions over a topic followed by a short answer or essay question about that same topic can reduce the usefulness of cheating.

5. GIVE THE CORRECT ANSWER, BUT HAVE STUDENTS EXPLAIN WHY IT IS CORRECT

Instead of asking "which of the following should an instructor do to reduce cheating on an exam", rework the question to "The instructor should do X, rather than Y, to reduce cheating on an exam. Why is this?" or "What advantages does X provide over Y?"

6. GIVE A SCENARIO WITH AN INCORRECT ANSWER AND HAVE STUDENTS FIX IT

Giving a narrative question with an incorrect answer and requiring students to identify the mistake, illustrate why it is a mistake, then offer and justify an improved solution requires deeper learning on behalf of the student.

7. REGULARLY RE-USE AND REWORK QUESTIONS FROM PAST QUIZZES/EXAMS

Cumulative exams aren't always appropriate, but when material builds upon itself in the course it can be beneficial both for learning and encouraging academic honesty. If questions repeat or are being iterated on in future exams, the student will be incentivized to learn the material rather than be forced to cheat on every exam.

8. ASSUME STUDENTS KNOW THE BASIC INFORMATION, THEN HAVE THEM EXPAND ON IT

Instead of asking students to illustrate basic knowledge, like the steps of photosynthesis, assume they already know the process in your questioning – "At what step are sugar and oxygen created during photosynthesis?" requires the students to already know the steps as well as additional information.

9. GIVE USEFUL STUDY GUIDES

A study guide doesn't have to just be questions and answers – it can be which pages in the textbook are most valuable, which processes, formulas, or information they should know, or it can even be a quiz worth 0 points that allows for infinite attempts. Anxiety is a strong motivator to cheat, so reducing anxiety is a fantastic way to improve student well-being and reduce cheating at the same time.