ONLINE EXAM PROCTORING: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

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Panelists

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Online Learning at UB

Intended Instructional Delivery Type - Fall 2020

- Primarily in-person
- Primarily online
- Both in-person and online (hybrid)

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Law
Regulations around Identity Verification

Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 requires institutions receiving Title IV funding to verify student identity through one of these three methods:

1. Secure login and password (possibly through an LMS)
2. Proctored examinations
3. Other technologies and practices
Measuring our impact: Assessment of student learning

From MSCHE:

**Standard V - Educational Effectiveness Assessment**

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution’s students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution’s mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

**Criteria**

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

1. clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution’s mission;

2. organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals.
Pedagogical Pressure for Secure Exam Environments

- Academic Dishonesty
- Lack of Equity in Grading
- Weak Signaling to Students about Preparedness
- Potential for Damaged Reputation with Employers and External Constituencies
Evidence of academic dishonesty

Burkett (2017) cites a 2017 study by Kessler International (300 students) revealing that

- 86% of students stated they cheated in some way online.
- 76% copied material from somebody else’s assignment.
- 79% admitted to plagiarism from researching information online.
- 72% stated they used their mole devices to cheat.
- 54% said it was okay to cheat.
- 42% purchased custom term paper online.
- 28% had a service take their online classes for them.
Strategies to reduce/prevent academic dishonesty

- Time-pressured exams.
- Pooled exam questions.
- Instructor created exam questions/cases – avoiding the use of publisher materials.
- Use of non-traditional question formats such as multiple-choice questions that require an “explanation” or “justification”.
- Altering student incentives by lowering weights for “traditional exams”.
- More unique, written, and project-based assignments.
- Use of tools such as Turnitin for written work.
Strategies to reduce/prevent academic dishonesty

HOWEVER...

• Each strategy is effective but not efficient.

• Strategies may unevenly impact students without clearly measuring learning.
Creating a meaningful assessment experience

- Student completes assessment with permissible resources.
- Student completing the assessment is the student enrolled in the course and program.

Meaningful assessment
Methods of Identify Verification

- Shibboleth sign-on
- Photo ID and live proctoring/recording
- Biometric controls
Is exam proctoring a potential solution?

- Simulates “live” exams in face-to-face classes
- Allows controlled access to resources
- Provides verification of student identity
Exam Proctoring Options

- Live proctoring/lockdown browser
- Record and review/lockdown browser
- Record/lockdown browser

With each of these options, the live or AI proctor provides a report to the professor who decides on appropriate action.
Online Exam Proctoring 1.0

ProctorU pilot AY 2020

• Product was selected because it was integrated into publisher LMS at fixed, reduced cost. Cost of ProctorU borne by the institution – student paid for publisher LMS access.

• Integrated into a limited number of courses within the Merrick School of Business over the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semester.
Lessons from the pilot

- Online proctoring is new to most students.
- Many students expressed apprehension about the use of the proctoring software.
  - Privacy concerns
  - Decreased opportunity to use unpermitted resources
- Given the option of using the proctoring software or taking the exam in person, virtually every student opted to for the software.
- Students were most concerned about a live proctoring situation.
- Access to reliable high-speed internet and appropriate hardware and software is essential for students.
Lessons from the pilot

The proctoring tool matters!
- Ability to detect unpermitted behaviors.
- Ease of use and quality of support.
- Turn around time for review of exam sessions.

- What didn’t work well made us better prepared for the RFP in Summer 2020.
Online Exam Proctoring 2.0

- RFP issued by UB but expanded to MEEC.
  - Representation from faculty from multiple colleges, online education, and IT.
- Selected vendor: PSI – RPNow
  - Exam parameters established through building block in Sakai LMS, although exams can be created and administered in a variety of platforms.
  - Multiple options (automated, automated with review, live proctoring)
  - All options include a lock down browser, limits on other software and resources accessible by students, and faculty access to the recorded assessment session.
  - Cost carried by institution
Policy Development

• Use of the pilot identified gaps in policy
• Selection of a product with options identified potential problems within and across schools, plus budgetary impact
• Need for legal counsel
• Federal and accreditation requirements about advance notice with respect to potential costs
  ➢ Needed institutional policy
Policy Development

- Requirements for compliance
- Challenges with vendor add-on products and FERPA (who chooses what a University-approved product is?)
- Identify where uniformity is needed and where flexibility is
- Requirements for continuity of assessing student learning
  (different kinds of multi-section courses – u/d ethics vs, say, BIOL 121 taught by same prof with same assignments)
Policy Development

University-wide policy on proctoring:

- [http://www.ubalt.edu/policies/academic/VII_5-TI_Online_Proctoring_Policy.pdf](http://www.ubalt.edu/policies/academic/VII_5-TI_Online_Proctoring_Policy.pdf)
- Notification requirements (syllabus, any cost identified in advance – e.g., course schedule note); practice run required
- Product has to have University approval (Provost and OTS with input from DAS, CELTT, faculty)
- Identify resources allowed during an exam
- Everyone in a section must use if it if any do (“fair and equitable” implementation)
  - MSB: Use of any tool is voluntary by faculty. However, in multi-section courses, all sections should use the same strategy for assurance of academic integrity.
Institutional Support for Students

- Students needed access to a laptop or desktop computer, webcam, and wifi.
- Loaners quickly and easily provided to students who needed them.
- Live 24/7 student support with proctoring solution provided by the vendor.
- Support also provided by institution for LMS-related issues and by third party course management providers.
Best Practices

• Use a practice exam early in the semester.
• Develop an institutional policy on proctoring that represents the interests of students and faculty.
• Select a product that reflects the character and diverse needs of the institution.
• Ensure that students understand proctoring practices at the time of registration.
• Explain the value of proctoring to students.
• Ensure that students know how to receive help and which entity to contact.
Exams in this class will be monitored through proctoring software RPNow, administered within Sakai. This software will ask you to confirm your identity and will record your exam session. In addition to monitoring and recording, RPNow may restrict activation of software and the visiting of web sites not permitted during an exam; these restrictions are completely temporary and disappear once the exam is complete. While this monitoring may feel a bit intrusive, the intention is to level the playing field and make sure that all students are taking exams under the same conditions – similar to the environment of a face-to-face course. RPNow authenticates your identity and monitors both your computer screen and webcam to ensure academic integrity. You can take it in the comfort of your own home or from another location with a stable internet connection. Use of RPNow is free to UB students and the entire cost has been absorbed by the university.

To find more information, you should visit the RPNow website (www.psionline.com/rpnowuniversity/student/). From this site, you can find out more about how the software works and determine whether your system meets the technical requirements of the software. A practice exam will be provided during the first month of the course so that you can have a better understanding of the testing environment.

RPNow and the University of Baltimore have strict protocols and policies, technical and managerial, in place to protect your identity. Also please understand that while RPNow can monitor your activities during an assessment, only UB Faculty can consult with students regarding potential breeches of the testing environment and act on the results of those consultations within the realm of University policy. RPNow is fully compliant with FERPA and other federal regulations protecting student information. With the exception of students identified by the Center for Educational Access - Disability Support Services - as having need of an accommodation, all students are required to complete assessments in an environment that is uniform.
Questions for our panel?

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For more information on this topic

• Join Professors Gerlowski and Demarest on Thursday at 2 pm for a Lightning Round Talk on Online Proctoring and Alternatives.
