



**Student:** “My exam is open book so I don’t really need to study.”

**Faculty:** “How can I deter students from cheating during my online exams?”

The purpose of this Teaching Tip is to offer some low tech ways to deter cheating during your online exams. Please note that I do believe that faculty genuinely care about assessing their students’ learning, and I do not believe that most students will resort to cheating.

For faculty who do not wish to adopt Respondus Monitor, there are other strategies you might consider to discourage cheating. But first, have you shared with your students what you consider is ‘cheating’ and why it’s important to assess what they have learned? Have you clearly stated what is allowed or not allowed during your online exam? If you are meeting via Zoom or having asynchronous discussion forums, you might consider having these conversations before final exam week.

During an online exam without the use of real or virtual proctors, it’s difficult to near impossible to prevent students from using their textbooks and notes or collaborating with peers, but you can implement some strategies to minimize it. The following are options to consider:

- **EduCat Quiz/Exam Settings:**
  - Shuffle the order of your questions and answers.
  - Limit the total time for the exam (usually 1 minute per question for most multiple choice items unless higher level Bloom’s questions are being used which require more time for complex problem solving or calculations).
  - Prohibit the return to previously answered questions. (This setting is not popular with students).
  - Limit the number of question per page to less than five, but note each page may take more time to load.
  - Do not show scores or release answers before your exam has closed and all the students have completed it.  
(Scott Smith, personal communication, April 17, 2020).
- **Test Construction**
  - Design test questions that address specific course content or examples from your lectures (Farrell, 2015).
  - Create challenging questions written at the application or analysis level with plausible distractors to ensure higher level learning (Farrell, 2015).
  - Create essays or problems which require students to demonstrate mastery over the subject matter.
  - Develop test banks with multiple questions for each exam so that students do not receive the exact same questions.



- **Test Security**

- Check to see if your test questions have migrated into Quizlet. You can copy and paste your test questions into their browser to determine if your test has been compromised (Henry, 2018; McKenzie, 2018).
- Plan to revise exams each semester as 'sharing' questions on Quizlet is a common occurrence.
- Be sure to 'hide' your quizzes/exams before your course is archived at the end of the semester. Students have access to completed courses in EduCat for two years and thus, your quiz/exam answers can be shared if still visible.
- Use Unicheck software to detect potential plagiarism in essay answers.
- Look for similar or sophisticated answers in open-ended or essay questions and examine time stamps on test submissions to see if students collaborated (Henry, 2018).

For the remainder of this semester, faculty have the option of piloting an online proctoring software called **Respondus Monitor**. While Respondus Lockdown prevents students from accessing the Internet or switching to other applications during an exam, it does not prevent them from using another device or resources. In the proctored classroom when using Respondus Lockdown, faculty observe students to ensure they are not using cell phones, smart watches, cheat sheets, or their peers. During nonproctored exams, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) does not recommend use of Respondus Lockdown unless you are using the Monitor function. Respondus Monitor uses the students' webcams and microphones to record while they are taking online, non-proctored exams. The software incorporates advanced analytics to detect suspicious behaviors such as talking on a phone or looking away from the screen. The program 'flags' potential exam violations which the faculty review to determine if cheating has occurred.

Faculty who decide to use Monitor will need to notify the CTL, inform students of this change, provide instructions for students to set up their computers, and create a practice quiz to test the software before their scheduled final exam. Faculty should consider attending the Monitor webinar on Monday, April 20th at 3 pm via [Zoom](#). The CTL staff have also created a reference document for [Monitor](#). If you need assistance with Monitor, exam design, or related EduCat quiz settings, please contact us via email [ctl@nmu.edu](mailto:ctl@nmu.edu) or phone 906-227-2483.

#### References

Farrell, M. (2015, March 18). Want to stop cheating on online quizzes...Let them cheat! *Online Learning Consortium*. [https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/want-stop-cheating-online-quizzes-let-cheat/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI8tPQ-4fw6AIVA\\_jBx1kAq5GEAAYASAAEqJW5PD\\_BwE](https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/want-stop-cheating-online-quizzes-let-cheat/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI8tPQ-4fw6AIVA_jBx1kAq5GEAAYASAAEqJW5PD_BwE)



Henry, N. (2018, September 21). Professors find ways to prevent cheating in online classes. *DailyToReador*. [http://www.dailytoreador.com/news/professors-find-ways-to-prevent-cheating-for-online-classes/article\\_74838ffa-bdc1-11e8-81c8-d72d20ca3dc0.html](http://www.dailytoreador.com/news/professors-find-ways-to-prevent-cheating-for-online-classes/article_74838ffa-bdc1-11e8-81c8-d72d20ca3dc0.html)

McKenzie, L. (2018, May 14). Learning tool or cheating aid? *Inside Higher Education*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/05/14/professors-warned-about-popular-learning-tool-used-students-cheat>