



Questionmark Case Study

Coosa Valley Technical College Tests Online For Ultrasound

Background

Coosa Valley Technical College in Rome, Ga. is the home of many of the health education programs offered by the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education technical college system, including the Ultrasound programs (Diagnostic Ultrasound, Echocardiography and Vascular Sonography). The program teaches students how to perform ultrasound scans and recognize pathologies in those scans.

Problem

After they graduate from the ultrasound program, students who have finished the 18-month curriculum have to do one more thing: pass their national certification exam. Instructors wanted to make sure that students were comfortable with the online testing format, because that's how the national certification exam is conducted. They also wanted to preserve precious class time for learning. Tests had to include images, since students had to be able to identify what was shown in an ultrasound. But with paper-and-pencil tests, it was difficult to add images to questions—and expensive.

Solution

The department started using Questionmark™ Perception™ in 1999. Perception templates allowed Penrose to customize tests so they closely resembled the national certification exams. Perception allows Penrose to import ultrasound or other images into questions, so that he can create hot spot questions. Students must position their cursor over an identified vein or valve in an image, or identify what blood vessel an arrow is pointing at. But most of the questions are multiple-choice because that's what the certification exam is like. "We want to get students used to this, so that it isn't stressful when they take their exam," says Penrose.

Penrose uses Perception Enterprise Manager to schedule all tests. It allows him to control who sees what test, so that students get the correct test on their desktops when they walk into class but don't see other tests that they shouldn't see.

Questionmark Secure

Before the college began using Questionmark Secure, faculty had to keep a close eye on students to make sure they weren't instant-messaging questions to each other or printing out the whole test. But with Questionmark Secure, all of the other programs of a computer (especially the print function and Instant Messenger) are disabled.

Results

Today, Penrose says he has an item bank of more than 5,000 questions that the department uses for quizzes, unit tests, and comprehensive exams, as well as multiple mock registry exams with 180 items that prepares students for the real thing.

Penrose and the other faculty are adding feedback to each question with Perception's feedback tool. Now, when students take a test, the feedback tells them which items they got wrong and right, and why. Penrose also uses the coaching report so that he can identify what areas the student needs to improve in.

"We enjoy the flexibility and the power that Perception has," comments Penrose. "It is common among software programs that the simple programs are easy to learn and maintain. However, the value gained from a quick learning curve does not balance with the restrictiveness of the simple programs. The powerful programs take a bit more effort to learn and manage. We believe that the power that Perception brings is worth the extra effort."

More information

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