



Questionmark Case Study

Rio Salado College Puts Online Assessment to the Test for Distance Learners

Background

When it comes to online learning, Rio Salado College is recognized as one of the nation's premier e-learning colleges. The college's headquarters, located in Tempe, Arizona, offers more than 435 online courses, serving more than 60,000 students annually worldwide, of which more than 25,000 take courses online.

Scenario

Every assessment and exam in Rio Salado's online courses is conducted via Questionmark™ Perception™. When Rio Salado began using Perception in 2000, it was only used for the 80 distance learning courses the college provided for the Army. The college came to realize the magnitude of what Perception was capable of while creating assessments and exams for those courses. Today, Rio Salado has nearly 10,000 assessments and more than 87,000 items in its item bank.

Easy Test Delivery

When a course is created at Rio Salado, the course production staff formats all the assessments, quizzes or exams that faculty write. These assessments can then be taken whenever the student is ready. However, high-stakes exams like midterm or final exams are monitored, either by staff at one of Rio Salado's testing centers (for local students) or by proctors (for out-of-county distance learning students).

In the past, the college faxed paper exams to thousands of proctors across the state and the nation. Now, all assessments, whether or not they need to be monitored, are scheduled automatically in Perception, eliminating the need for faxing paper exams.

Perception also delivers the right test to the right student at the right time. The college uses the scheduling tool heavily because students at Rio Salado start courses at different times, which means they take exams and complete assessments at different times as well. Perception's Enterprise Manager allows each assessment to be delivered the day students are ready to take it.

Scoring Tool

Faculty members use Perception's scoring tool frequently to grade assessments that cannot be automatically graded. Rubrics are used for subjective assignments to describe the dimensions of performance expected, to explain how the assignment will be graded, and to list how many points each level of performance earns. Faculty members are excited about the user-friendly capabilities of the scoring tool, such as the ability to use bolding and underlining or to change fonts and colors when giving feedback on an assessment.

Moving to Perception V4

Before the upgrading to Perception v4, the course production department was using a development environment to format and then publish items to a shared repository. With the new version, all items can now be stored in one repository without the need for publishing.

Revising assessments has become easier as well. Assessments already in Perception can be exported as Word files and delivered to faculty to revise. That way, if more than one person is reviewing the assessment, all changes can be tracked and checked for correct spelling and grammar.

Future Plans

The college is now ready to evolve its use of Perception in creating assessments. The instructional design team at Rio Salado is moving toward more interactive and randomized types of assessments.

More information

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