



Questionmark Case Study

Software Makes Testing Easier and More Cost Effective for Medical School

Scenario

Teaching pathology courses to medical students requires showing – and then testing on – images of specimen slides, tissues, and other similar visual material. Clearly, for such an important use, the photographs and drawings must be accurate and of high quality. When it comes time to test students on what they have learned, the test preparers must find a way to include the photos and drawings in each individual test booklet so students can move through the exam at their own pace.

At Louisiana State University's Health Sciences Center, Giovanni D. Lorusso, M.D. found there was no good way to include color images on paper exams without the prohibitive cost of reproduction.

"Copying 25 pages 175 [the number of students in the class] times for six exams over a year represents a huge duplicating cost," said Lorusso. "Then, we'd pick up all these booklets after the exam. We have to destroy them, so you have the shredding expense. It was all very costly."

Solution

LSU's medical school requires all students to own laptops. When the LSU course directors selected Questionmark™ Perception™ as the software on which to administer exams, it was easy for a computer support team to install the Perception browser on each of the student's machines.

On exam day, 175 students come to the laboratories, plug into the network, and then log on with the Perception browser. Instead of trying to reproduce detailed images on test booklets, Lorusso can now put high resolution images on the computerized tests. He also uses video clips and flash animations in the questions. The program enables him to include drag and drop questions that ask students to identify specific spots on a picture or to drag a label to a specified location. None of this would be possible with a paper exam.

Paper exams also limited the possibilities for questions. Now, rather than having four choices on a multiple choice question, Lorusso can include as many as nine or ten choices. Perception also enables him to include fill-in-the-blank questions that can also be automatically scored. Computerized testing enables LSU to randomize the questions. Every student gets the same exam but all of the questions come in a different order with randomized choices. That makes the tests much more secure and greatly reduces the temptation to cheat.

Results

Lorusso uses Perception to deliver pathology exams to all of his 175 students at the same time. On exam day, the students come to the laboratories, plug into the network, and then log on with the Perception browser. Instead of trying to reproduce detailed images on test booklets, Lorusso can now put high resolution images on the computerized tests. In addition, he also uses video clips and flash animations in the questions. The program enables him to include drag and drop questions that ask students to identify specific spots on a picture or to drag a label to a specified location. None of this would be possible with a paper exam.

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More information

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