Blackboard Tip of the Week: What You Really Need to Know About Test Settings

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For faculty who are posting midterm exams for their 12-week Summer Session courses (or posting final exams for their 6-week Summer Session I courses), here are two *Bb* tips that you will really want to know about!

When you set up a test by editing test options (***Test Options***), one option that many faculty still select is Forced Completion, which forces students to complete the test in one sitting (i.e., they can't navigate away from the test and return to it before submitting it), whether or not the test has a time-limit. However, Forced Completion is a legacy feature in *Blackboard* and should be avoided, as it can cause unnecessary issues. For example, if you have enabled Forced Completion on a test, students who use their browser Back-Button to review previous questions will get bumped out of the test.

What's the alternative? If you set a time-limit for a test, and you don't have Forced Completion enabled, your students can take as much time as they want to to complete that test. However, when you go in to grade an attempt on that test, *Bb* will indicate exactly how much time a student used to complete that attempt, and so you have an iron-clad way of knowing whether or not a student completed the attempt within its assigned time-limit. In addition, in this scenario, you can also enable the Auto-Submit feature: if Auto-Submit is enabled, and a student exceeds the time-limit for the test, the test attempt will automatically submit itself. The above results will be the same regardless of whether you enable or prohibit back-tracking.

Although setting due-dates for your tests is a recommended best practice, a relatively new test-option in *Blackboard* that you should likewise avoid is the option to set up a test so that students can not submit attempts on it once its due-date has passed. The main issue with enabling this feature is that it can compromise the test's accessibility: that is, if you use Test Exceptions to provide ADA-compliant accommodations for students who need to take the test within a different time-frame than the rest of your students, those students will still *not* be able to access the test passed its assigned due-date. In effect, all of your test availability settings will be trumped if you prohibit students from submitting a test passed its due-date.

Here, too, there is an alternative. In this case, if you don't want students to make attempts on a test passed its due-date, simply use the Display Until control in Test-Options to set the test so that it becomes unavailable to students at a date and time that you specify.

Use the following link to view previous Bb tips of the week: ***BBTOTW-Archive***

As always, please feel free to contact the Distance Learning Office (**629-7070**/***DLHelp@hvcc.edu***) if you have any questions about this.