

How I Did It

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A new twist on multiple choice answer sheets teaches while testing, giving students immediate feedback on whether they've gotten the answer right.



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Students who use traditional multiple-choice test forms, Scantrons especially, leave the test without knowing the correct answers. What's more, psychologists know that the last answer a test-taker gives is most likely to be repeat - even if it's wrong. That means

students exit tests remembering incorrect information, answers they gave without corrective feedback.

With my husband, a psychology professor at Rider University, I've developed a new multiple-choice testing technique that teaches students

even as they're taking their exam. It's called "Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique," or IF-AT - a reminder of "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

This method uses a form in which the four multiple-choice options are covered, much as a lottery ticket is. If the right answer has been selected, the student will uncover a star beneath the opaque covering.

The student who uncovers the star knows that he's correct and earns full credit. The student who uncovers a blank is instructed to try again by re-reading the question and the remaining options. If he is correct on his second try, he earns partial credit for his "proximate knowledge."

So often, a test taker eliminates all but two options and guesses at the correct response. With traditional multiple-choice forms, that student would guess randomly - and sometimes correctly, though he wouldn't really know.

With immediate feedback forms, students can work through their top two choices - they learn while taking the test.

Students like the game quality of these forms, and they like leaving the test with correct information and their scores. They also tend to read the question and options more carefully than when using traditional forms.

For more information on the Immediate Feedback Assessment Techniques form, contact Beth Broder Epstein at 609/895-5424 or E-mail epstein@rider.edu.