

GETTING STUDENTS TO READ THE SYLLABUS (OR AT LEAST SOME OF IT!)

Dr. Scott Demsky
Professor
Broward College
3501 Davie Road, Davie, FL 33314
sdemsky@broward.edu

Introduction

The course syllabus is a contract between the student and the instructor which describes the structure of the class, the grading rubric, and what is expected of the student. Unfortunately, many students don't read and understand the syllabus, which can result in misunderstandings, missed deadlines, and sometimes even failure.

In this paper, we will demonstrate how to use MyLab Math to create a course Syllabus Quiz as a prerequisite to all other assignments in MyLab Math. The Syllabus Quiz can be used to ensure that students review and understand the key points in the syllabus, and it can serve as a "signed course contract" between the student and the instructor.

Purpose of the Syllabus Quiz

The purpose of the Syllabus Quiz is to help students understand the course structure by finding answers in the course syllabus to questions about:

- key dates (add/drop, withdrawal, tests, final exam, etc.);
- details about assignments (homework, quizzes, etc.);
- details about tests/final exam (type, frequency, make-up policy, etc.);
- how course grades are determined.

The Syllabus Quiz can also include a question which serves as a *course contract*.

Create Syllabus Quiz questions with the Pearson Custom Question Builder

To create questions for your Syllabus Quiz in MyLab Math, go to Assignment Manager → More Tools → Manage Custom Questions:

Assignment Manager

MGF1106-20242-725797-TR-0330 [30] ▾

Assignment Manager

Try new version Help

Create Assignment ▾ | Change Dates & Assign Status | Individual Student Settings | More Tools ▾

Show All ▾ All Chapters ▾

View: ☐ Assigned ☐ Unassigned ☒ All

- Assignment Tags
- Change Assignment Settings
- Change Categories
- Change Settings for Multiple Assignments
- Delete Assignments
- Reorder Assignments
- Set Prerequisites
- Manage Custom Questions

Order ↑	Ch.	Assignment Name	Start	Due	Actions
1	0	Syllabus Quiz	01/08/24	01/10/24	-- Select -- ▾
2	2	Section 2.1 In-class Homework	01/09/24 4:15pm	01/10/24	-- Select -- ▾
3	2	Section 2.2 Pre-class Homework	01/08/24	01/11/24 2:30pm	-- Select -- ▾
4	2	Section 2.2 In-class Homework	01/11/24 4:15pm	01/12/24	-- Select -- ▾
5	2	Section Quiz 2.1-2.2	01/08/24	01/19/24	-- Select -- ▾

Figure 1. Assignment Manager → More Tools → Manage Custom Questions

The first time you access Manage Custom Questions, you will need to install the Pearson Custom Question Builder.

To create a new question, start with an empty template:

Assignment Manager

Create Custom Question

1 Start 2 Choose Layout 3 Create/Edit Question

How would you like to create your question?

- ☐ Copy and edit a question from your online course
- ☐ Copy and edit a question from the sample question bank
- ☒ Start with an empty template
- ☐ Copy and edit a question from another instructor's account with this login:

You can only copy questions marked "Allow other instructors to copy and edit this question" by the author.

Figure 2. Start with an empty template to create a new question

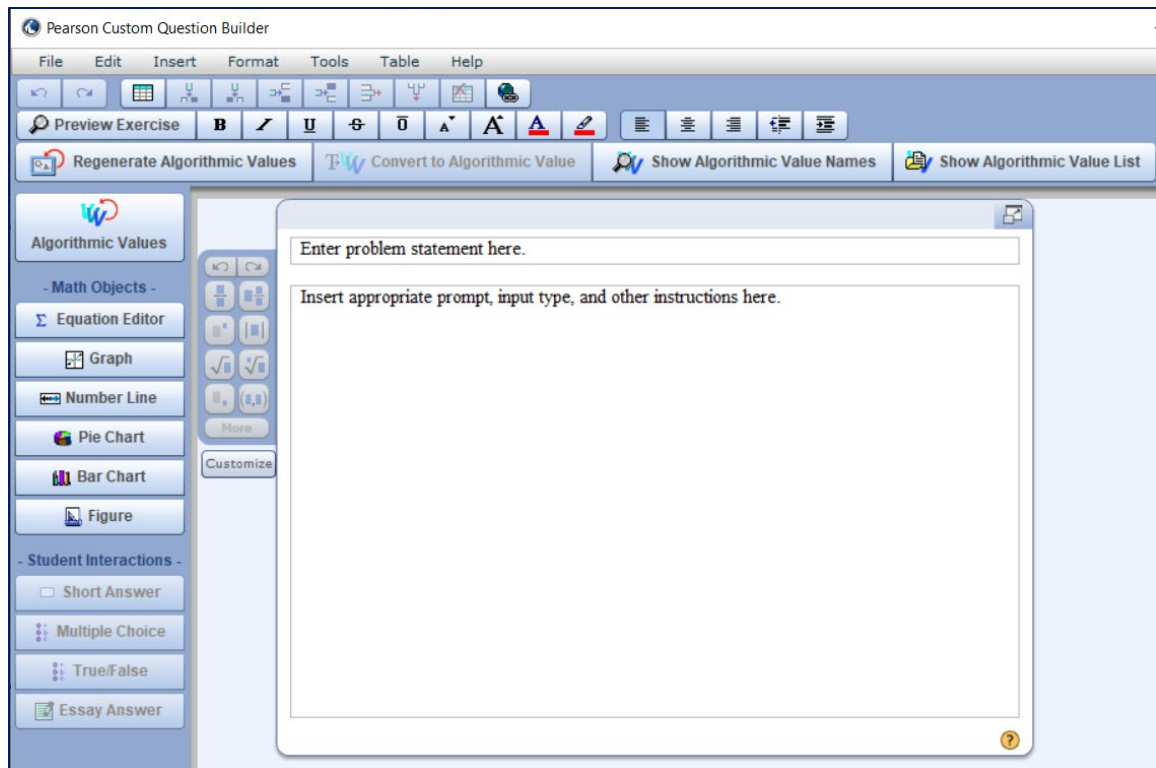


Figure 3. An empty template in Pearson Custom Question Builder

Here is a sample multiple choice question about test properties:

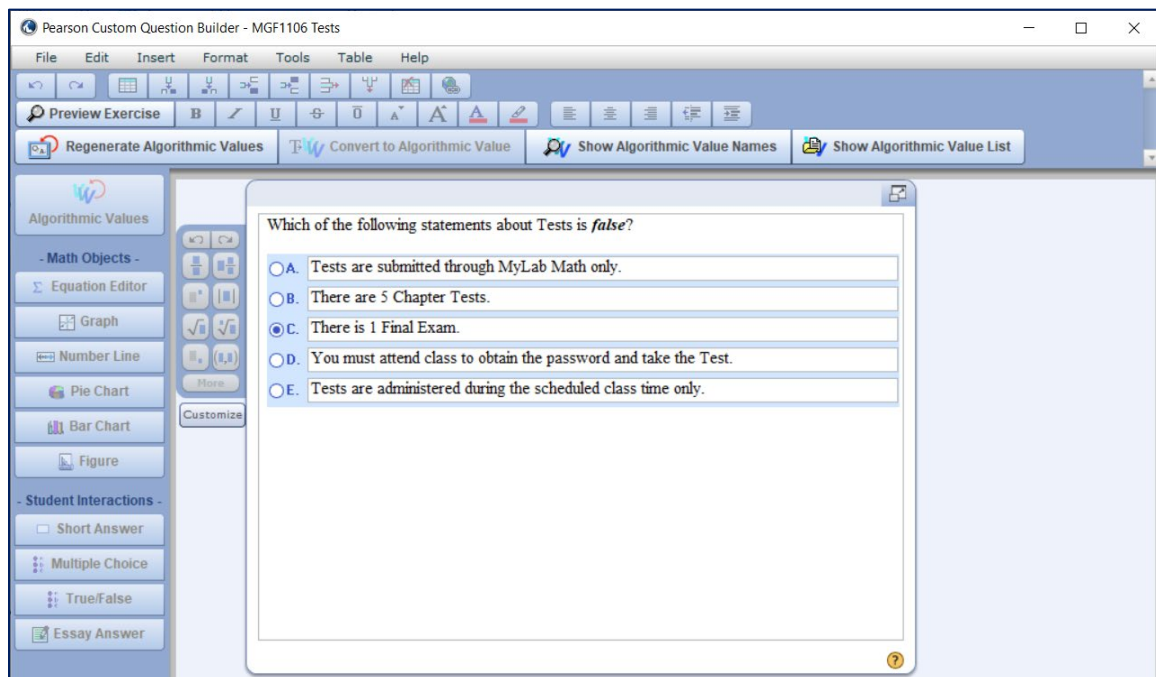


Figure 4. Multiple choice question about test properties

Here is the True-False that we use to serve as a *course contract*:

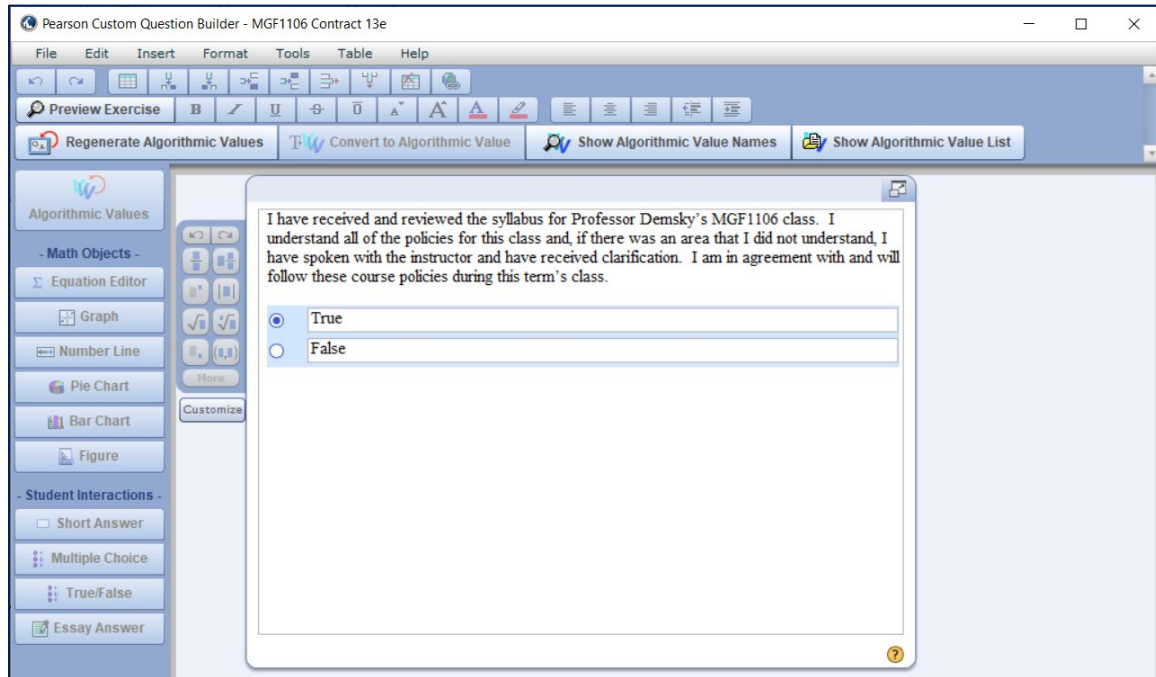


Figure 5. A True-False question that serves as a course contract

Create the Syllabus Quiz in MyLab Math

Once you've created all your Syllabus Quiz questions, you can create the Syllabus Quiz in MyLab Math by going to Assignment Manager → Create Assignment → Create Quiz:

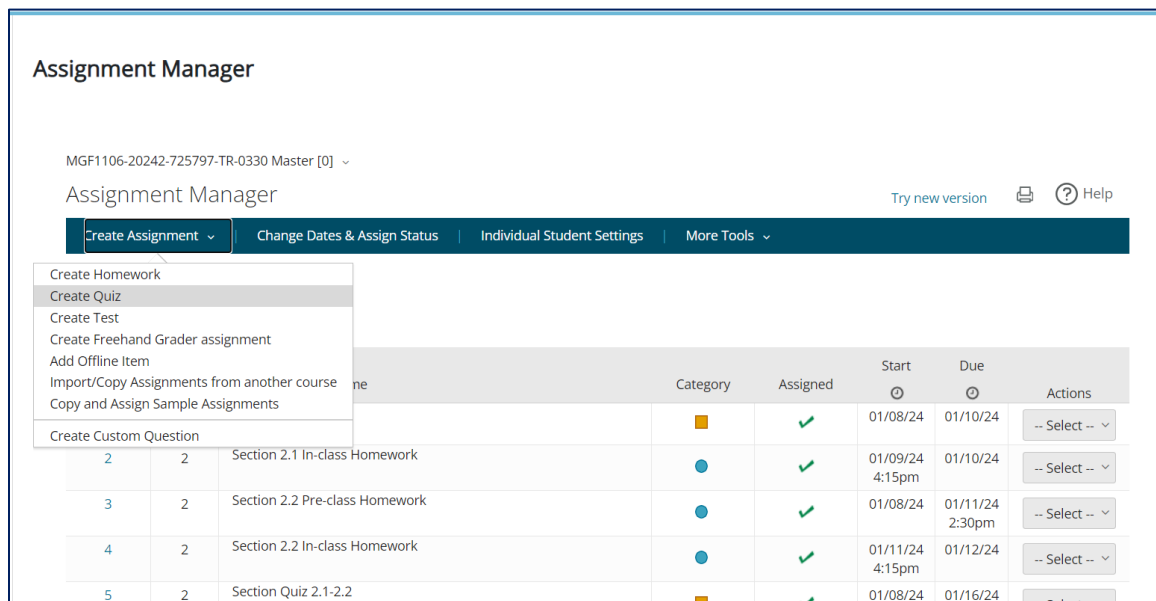


Figure 6. Assignment Manager → Create Assignment → Create Quiz

naming the quiz:

1 Start 2 Add/Remove Content 3 Choose Settings

Book Miller: Mathematical Ideas, 14e

Gradebook Category Quiz

Quiz Name Syllabus Quiz

☐ Assign a companion Study Plan as a prerequisite for this quiz

[Creating assignments for mobile use.](#)

Figure 7. Name the Syllabus Quiz

and choosing the questions from the library of custom questions you just created:

1 Start 2 Add/Remove Content 3 Choose Settings

Name Syllabus Quiz

Book Miller: Mathematical Ideas, 14e [Change...](#)

Chapter O. Orientation Questions for Students

Section All Sections

Objective All Objectives

Availability All questions

Question Source

- ☐ Show publisher questions
- ☐ Show additional test bank questions
- ☒ Show custom questions (+) for this book
- ☐ Show other custom questions [Refine Selection ...](#)
- [\(+\)](#) Create my own questions

Available Questions (10)

Question ID
+ In-class Hom...
+ (O) In-class As...
+ (O) In-class H...
+ (O) MGF1106 ...
+ (O) MGF1107 ...
+ (O) Project M...
+ (O) Section Q...
+ (O) Withdraw...
+ (O) Withdraw...
+ (O) Withdraw...

My Selections (10)

#	Question ID	Objective	Estimated time:	Points:
1	+ Withdrawal Date 20242		0s+	10
2	+ Pre-class Homework MyLab			10
3	+ In-class Homework MyLab			10
4	+ (O) Section Quizzes MGF			10
5	+ (O) MGF1106 Tests			10
6	+ Make-up Test 2019			10
7	+ Grading Rubric MGF1106			10
8	+ Final Grade 1			10
9	+ Final Grade 2			10
10	+ MGF1106 Contract 13e			10

Figure 8. Choose custom questions for your Syllabus Quiz

Make the Syllabus Quiz a MyLab Math prerequisite

To ensure that the students answer all the Syllabus Quiz questions correctly, make it a prerequisite to all other MyLab Math assignments by going to Assignment Manager → More Tools → Set Prerequisites. Be sure to make the minimum score 100%.

Assignment Manager

Set Prerequisites

Help

Select prerequisites for the assignments listed below.

All Assignments
Review Due Dates & Assigned Status

☒ Basic Settings
 ☐ Advanced Settings

These are prerequisites:		For these assignments:	
Prerequisite Item	Minimum Score (Optional)	Ch.	Assignment
None	%	0	Syllabus Quiz
Syllabus Quiz	100 %	2	Section 2.1 In-class Homework
Syllabus Quiz	100 %	2	Section 2.2 Pre-class Homework
Syllabus Quiz	100 %	2	Section 2.2 In-class Homework
Syllabus Quiz	100 %	2	Section Quiz 2.1-2.2
Syllabus Quiz	100 %	2	Section 2.3 Pre-class Homework

Figure 9. Assignment Manager → More Tools → Set Prerequisites

Update the Syllabus Quiz each semester

You can update the Syllabus Quiz each semester (new dates, new policies, etc.) by:

- returning to Assignment Manager → More Tools → Manage Custom Questions to modify existing questions and/or to create new questions;
- editing the existing Syllabus Quiz under Assignment Manager.

Conclusion

Using MyLab Math to create and maintain a Syllabus Quiz can be an easy and effective way to ensure that students are aware of the key elements of your course structure. It can also serve as an electronic course contract between students and the instructor that guarantees that the students have read the course syllabus (or at least some of it!).