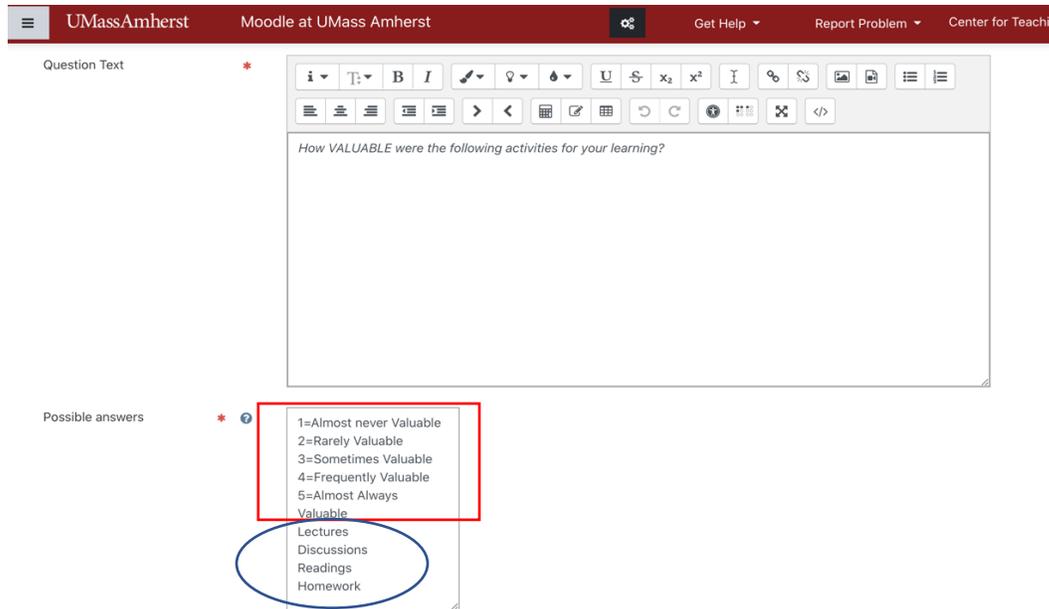


Forward FOCUS question design tips

In Moodle, how can I customize the question on how VALUABLE recurring activities were in my course? (Highly suggested customization)

- Change activity names to reflect what you called it in your course [e.g., instead of “Homework” → “Problem Sets”]. To find activities, once you are in editing mode, look in the “Possible answers” box (drag lower right corner of the box to enlarge the box and see all possible answers)
- Think of other recurring aspects of the course like “Feedback on assignments.” Add ones that you want feedback on to the list of activities [shown circled in blue].



- For support with this question in Moodle or Blackboard, email instruct@umass.edu.

How do I get feedback on one-time projects or assignments (e.g., a group project, exam)?

- Copy this question (see Moodle or Blackboard guide for instructions), change the names of the assignments [shown circled in blue], and change the response scale [shown boxed in red] to:
 - 1=Not at all VALUABLE
 - 2=A little VALUABLE
 - 3=Somewhat VALUABLE
 - 4=VALUABLE
 - 5=Very VALUABLE
- You could consider more precise descriptors besides VALUABLE like “HELPFUL for the final” or “RELEVANT to my future career.” Base these descriptors off your course goals and goals for your teaching.

Forward FOCUS question design tips

How can I write new questions that are clear and precise?

- Use simple, student-friendly language. Reduce verbiage.
- For open-ended questions, provide context and purpose for the question. For example, see the context provided in each question below (contextual comments are in italics):
 - *One of the goals of this course is to prepare you for your future career.* Please provide your thoughts on which course activities, listed below, were most effective in achieving that goal. Please explain why you feel they were effective. “
 - *I am considering adding a required synchronous session one time per week.* In your opinion, what kinds of activities would BEST support your learning and course engagement in a synchronous session?”
- For closed-ended questions:
 - Write the questions so that they make sense with the response scale. Typically that means that they are written as something the students themselves might say (e.g., “This instructor was ... or “These resources were”)
 - Avoid double barreled questions with “and” (e.g., How useful was **the homework and the review session** for your learning?). Instead, split into two questions (e.g., one about the homework and the other about the review session).

How can I get more students responding & responding thoughtfully?

- *Reflection on learning is a part of UMass general education learning outcomes and helps to solidify learning gains.* Some faculty provide extra credit or points to students for completing FOCUS and set this up automatically in Moodle or Blackboard. Email instruct@umass.edu for help setting this up FOCUS as an extra credit activity.
- Talk honestly with your students about purpose of **survey**. Share changes you’ve made to your courses based on student feedback. Share how long it will take (8-10 minutes).
- Ideally, use FOCUS as a part of a course wrap up activity that occurs during the last week of classes. A 3-stage synchronous or asynchronous wrap-up might look like:
 - Students brainstorm in small groups what they feel were the most important things and skills they learned, how they feel they’ve grown over the semester, and which aspects of the course helped them to learn and grow in these ways. *This activity helps students remember, with the aid of their peers, their learning over the entire semester.*
 - A full class discussion might follow this activity in which students present their areas of agreement on the most important takeaways from this course. *This activity serves to help students begin to prioritize the different things that learned or learned to do.*
 - After this discussion, have students take 8-10 minutes to individually complete the Forward FOCUS. *Explain that the FOCUS allows them to identify the most important learning for them, personally, and provides a forum for anonymous feedback.*
- If you can’t use class time for the FOCUS, we strongly suggest making the FOCUS part of a weekly assignment checklist, reminder email, and other methods used to communicate tasks to students.