A. Test Security

There are MULTIPLE versions of each type of IF-AT form. Instructors whose institutions regularly use IF-AT forms might consult with each other about which forms they use in order to decrease the likelihood of overlap. Also note that IF-AT forms are perforated at the bottom so the instructor can easily separate the form code from the scratch-off part of the form: the IF-AT version of the form remains unknown to the student. The top of the form where students record their name, date, etc. is also perforated. THE SCRATCH OFF PORTION OF THE IF-AT FORM SHOULD NOT LEAVE THE CLASSROOM IN A STUDENT’S POSSESSION. Also, as with any test, students should sit as far away from each other as possible.

Some instructors of very large lecture classes use multiple versions (code numbers) of IF-AT forms in the same class, but color-code the question sheets that go with each. Then students sit alternatively, according to the color of their question sheet. Instructors can see at a glance whether two students with the same colored question sheets are sitting beside each other.

B. Instructions for Matching and Scratching . . .

Some students using IF-AT forms for the first time might be anxious about scratching in the wrong space, the wrong line, or not being able to change an answer. Therefore:

1. Students should be told to use the top edge of the question sheet (or any straight-edge) to insure that they are scratching on the correct line of the IF-AT form.

2. Students should be reminded to read the question and all options slowly and accurately.

3. Students should scratch carefully so as not to tear the answer form.

4. Students should be reminded that the star for the correct answer can appear anywhere within the box and therefore scratch the entire box.

5. Since students can earn points, EVEN if their first or second (or third) response is incorrect they should re-read the question and remaining responses and “IF-AT first they don’t succeed, try, try again.” They will learn, incidentally, to become more careful, accurate readers, to think before responding, and to persist in seeking a correct answer.

6. Students can use any of a number of “tools” to scratch off. Popular tools include: a penny, a tooth pick, a popsicle stick, the edge of a plastic student I.D. card, or the top of a Bic-type pen.

7. Students can determine their scores on IF-AT forms by neatly writing the value of their answers on the line to the right of each item and tabulating a running total of points earned. Instructors can check quickly for accuracy.

8. Students – and perhaps instructors, too – might assume that testing with the IF-AT takes longer than traditional multiple-choice testing. Actually, instructors report that, after the first time or a practice session, the increase in testing time is negligible. On the other hand, instructors gain time by not needing to spend valuable class time reviewing exams (“post mortems”). With the IF-AT’s immediate corrective feedback, students gain knowledge.

Last Words....

Instructors in many hundreds of schools, colleges, and graduate programs in the United States and abroad now use IF-AT forms. One attribute of IF-AT that makes it popular with students at all levels is its game-like quality. It is actually fun to take IF-AT tests, and students often ask that more be given! Students like a sense of being “in control” of the test and appreciate the opportunity of partial credit and the chance to “get it right,” emerging from each question with the right answer, and knowing their scores before leaving the test. Interestingly, researchers have not found this to be the case when students take traditional multiple-choice tests, whether they are paper, pencil or computer-generated. The IF-AT offers students and teachers the opportunity to enjoy the test-taking process!