



## The Advantage of Including Student-Designed Tests

by John G. Hernandez, TFS Author

In my classes, students design all of their essay exams (with the exception of the first). After their first exam, which I design, students have a clearer idea of what an essay question should look like. This approach has several benefits:



- ▶ Students learn that the questions are at least as important as the answers.
- ▶ Students take more of an interest in these exams because they have a sense of ownership.
- ▶ The greater variety of questions (and answers) raises the probability of measuring a wide range of knowledge and skills.

After explaining the exam designing process, I give instructions to the class. Some class time is then devoted to drafting and reviewing a sample of student-designed questions. I help students fine tune their questions. As a bonus, this activity acts as an effective springboard for discussing the merits of a properly focused and clearly stated question.

I now incorporate this strategy into every section of the classes I teach. It is adaptable to almost any course and requires students to immerse themselves into their material.

And what's more, my philosophy students see what Bertrand Russell meant when he said, "...for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind..."