

PW: Mastery test does not show score

PRODUCTS AFFECTED

- PLATO Pathways 4.X

SYMPTOMS

As a PLATO administrator or instructor, you may want the courseware mastery test score to be recorded for progress reporting purposes. However, PLATO courseware was designed as a mastery-based educational tool and was not designed to keep score. Please see the explanation below.

SOLUTION

The score is not recorded because PLATO courseware was designed to be a mastery-based educational tool. In other words, either a user will master the courseware, or he won't. The score shows only the percentage correct out of the questions asked, not a percentage of *all* the questions.

The mastery test requires the user to get four questions correct before he can move on. If the user gets the first four correct, he doesn't have to answer the fifth question. However, if the user gets one wrong, he will be required to answer the fifth question correctly.

Let's say a user who answered four questions in a row correctly would have gotten the fifth one wrong if he had been required to answer it. He would receive a percentage of 80 instead of 100. Therefore, his score would have been no different (percentage wise of five total answers) than the score of the user who got one of the first four wrong, but answered the fifth one correctly. However, in the current setup, the user who answered four questions in a row correctly would have received a score of 100%; the other user would receive a score of 80% — even though they BOTH knew 4 of the 5 questions. This would not be fair, nor truly indicative of the progress of the students.

Here is another example. If one user gets the first two questions wrong, he is bumped out of the courseware immediately. But, if another user gets the first three correct and the last two wrong, she isn't bumped out until she answers the fifth question. Let's assume again that both of the users know three of the five answers. The first user would get a score of 0%, while the second user would get a score of 60%. Again, for scoring purposes, this would be unfair. So, the percentage is really just for informative purposes and was not designed to be used as a reporting tool by PLATO.

PLATO was designed to test mastery of the subject, not designed to record percentages. When a user answers a certain number questions correctly, the PLATO software determines the user has mastered that subject.

The drills in some curricula, however, do provide percentage scores, since they reflect the percentage answered correctly out of a fixed number of questions asked. Not all curricula are designed with this feature.