

Can Multiple Choice Question quizzes positively impact students' written responses in Y10 Poetry assessments?

60% STUDENTS INCREASED THEIR OVERALL LEVEL

17 out of 28 students improved their overall grade. 9 remained the same.

REFLECTIONS

Improvements were clearly made by students who had undertaken the MCQ assessments. Interestingly, improvements were apparent in knowledge (understanding AO1, subject terminology/techniques AO2 and contextual information AO3) rather than SPAG/presentation - though marks and levels are not split by AOs. Students demonstrated full knowledge or partial knowledge (Hutchinson, 1982 in Lau, P., 2011). However, only one class has been analysed and therefore the sample size is small. It is also important to acknowledge that they are top set students so it is difficult to directly link improved knowledge to MCQ test performance, and not just improved learning.

MCQs - WWW

- Provide clearer data with little to no additional marking = clear direction for adaptive teaching (TS5)
- Present as motivational tools for students who perhaps struggle with the looser boundaries of English as a subject because students can immediately see if they're succeeding/progressing
- Turn the higher-order analysis of poems (e.g. meanings, interpretations) into more surface level knowledge, meaning that more students could recall important information about poems, adding greater insight and understanding to their responses

MCQs - EBI

- Tests are open to guessing and/or performance responses. Consequently, it is not overly clear which type of knowledge is being used by the student when answering the MCQs
- Testing immediately after the content is taught could suggest memory/performance-based success. Timings are critical to the accuracy of data interpretation.
- Tests do not address/correct the skills that written assessments require (Scouller, K., 2006)

MOVING FORWARD...

- Continue to design MCQs that embed deeper level-thinking as surface level knowledge: students evidently utilised this information which was provided by the tests, in their written responses
- Ensure appropriate and adequate timing for MCQ assessments: address misconceptions before the formality of written assessment takes place, consider re-testing to improve motivation and morale
- Employ tactics that remove guessing or performance based approach to assessments (e.g. Elimination Testing, Confidence Weighting): could consider penalties for this approach (Holt, A., 2006)

WHY POETRY?

Poetry presents a perfect challenge of MCQ assessments as it is arguably a subjective topic. Traditionally, it is measured by a student's performance in summative written assessments. The process of writing an assignment/ essay involves analytical, critical thinking and communication skills which are suggestive of a deep learning approach (Scouller, K., 2006). As well as this, many of the pedagogical recommendations for poetry stem from Personal Response teaching (Rosenblatt, 1994 in Sigvardsson, A., 2017) meaning students' own interpretations/attachments are required for understanding. Additionally, a survey of Secondary School teachers (Benton, P., 1984) revealed these views on teaching poetry:

- "Poetry is about sensitivity to life. A poem is someone's direct reaction to experience—we are enabled to share the experience and the feelings it generated.
- "To make it broad enough to satisfy several needs is to dilute it out of all value very often"

APPLICATION

- 10A1 (top set), 28 students
- 2x written assessments compared (November 2020 vs May 2021)
- 2x Component MCQ assessments relating to 1x Poetry Composite ('How do the poets present ideas of resistance towards authority?')
- Each MCQ had 5x questions: 1 question stem, 3 to 5 options, and a minimum of 1 plausible distractor. The number of keys (correct answers) varied with each question

The images show three examples of MCQ assessments and student responses. The first is a blank 'Composite 2 MCQ' form. The second is a 'Composite 2 MCQ (Aisha 3/5)' form with handwritten answers and a feedback form. The third is a 'Composite 2 Assessment (Natalia 29/6)' form with handwritten answers and a feedback form.

Composite 2 MCQ (blank)

Composite 2 MCQ (Aisha 3/5)

Composite 2 Assessment (Natalia 29/6)

INTRODUCTION

This study looks at the use of Multiple Choice Question [MCQ] quizzes with a Y10 Literature group who undertook two written Poetry mock assessments: one in November 2020, and another in May 2021. Using theory and evidence, it will draw a conclusion as to whether or not MCQs can positively impact the written exam responses produced by students.

ABOUT MCQS

- Credited to Frederick J. Kelly who, in 1914, intended to address the subjective judgement of assessments in education by tackling the variability of tests with standardised formats (Davidson, C. N., 2011)
- Most regarded means for objective testing of knowledge, ability or performance (Ben-Simon et al., 1997, in Lau, P., 2011)
- Do not credit partial knowledge (Kurz, 1999 in Lau P., 2011)
 - Types of knowledge: full, partial, absence, partial misconception, full misconception (Hutchinson, 1982 in Lau, P., 2011)
- Number Right [NR] method is conventional scoring strategy but is argued as poor educational practice because students can guess (Oh, 2004 in Lau, P., 2011)
- However, they could provide an alternative form of assessment in English which is heavily weighted towards subjective skills that are difficult to assess - e.g. writing (Haladyna, T. M. et al., 2002)

References:

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