



Multiple Choice Assessment on a 'Government and Institutions' Module

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Origins

- Design of assessment for a level 1 module originally developed for Social Policy students but now accessed by a wide range of Social Science students
- Responding to gaps in students foundational factual knowledge of the subject which created barriers to more advanced work in subsequent modules in years 1 and 2

Assessment in Action

- A one hour multiple choice/short answer exam. The purpose is to test the factual knowledge acquired by students during the course.
- Two pieces of short coursework (800 words long). The first piece of work is set early on - and involves the student answering a series of straightforward questions. The objective of this assessment is to get students to write clear, concise answers and to build their confidence in the first few weeks of term (and to help staff identify any early problems).

What are the benefits in terms of students' learning?

- The course is designed around students gaining factual knowledge both in terms of what is taught and students' independent learning - questions are also given to students to complete week-by-week.
- The aim of the multiple choice assessment is to encourage students to develop factual knowledge of a particular subject as the basis for further study.

Benefits for teaching?

Being able to monitor whether students are actually learning.

'I wanted to know that they knew whether something was right or not'

Feedback

'Student feedback has always been very positive. Students like the structure, the approach ...that the course gives them'

'Nobody's yet got 100%. Which is both kind of depressing in the sense that you'd hope somebody got 100% but also good, it shows actually the multiple choice questions are quite hard as well'

Further developments

This module has been developed further this year:

- student learning is further supported by giving multiple choice-type questions out each week. Sometimes this occurs in class (students in small groups, then altogether), other times the questions are given out at the end of a class and worked through in the next session. An illustration of this is that two weeks can be given to issues on the EU.
- The first written assignment remains a series of short questions. The second involves the Internet. Students have to search for a government document (that is meant to be of interest to them) and explain the processes they went through to find it. They are then requested to provide a short summary of either the full document's summary or introduction, but must attach the original document summary with their own work.



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