

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS FOR MARINE ENGINEERS TESTING MATERIAL

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The accent of ability in English language competency was highlighted at the new IMO Marine Safety Committee (IMO MSC 82, 2006). Testing one's English language in general is more or less standardized today. Testing standards are widely accepted and used for many professions. The applicant's English language proficiency and his maritime competency is determined by means of got degrees or stages by modeled English maritime tests, MARLINS, TOMEK, MarTEL etc. Nowadays there are dissimilar kinds of methods how to analysis level of competencies. And whether to talk almost seafaring manufacture, multiple choice testing is extensively used to evaluate practical (training) effectivity. The function of multiple choice interrogations is that they can be rather efficient at investigation ability in particular area (marine engineering). This is significant in the marine manufacture due to each ability and competencies are fixed in the introduction of knowledge. While this knowledge is not enough to guarantee that a competency is held or executed, it is essential. Most scientists A. Omari, L. Holder, P. M. Muirhead, who investigate into the use of multiple choice questions, claim measures must be taken to make multiple choice questions as testing material valid in terms of content and range. Writing competencies have to be tested individually as part of comprehensive assessment strategy, and multiple choice questions can't be extremely efficient at testing certain forms of knowledge.

The theses aim at maximizing the advantages and minimizing of disadvantages of multiple choice questions, as they are likely to be the continuing feature towards marine and teaching standards.

When implementing the competency-based approach in our studying process of K.SMA the following idea comes forth: the confirmation of competence will require its demonstration and evaluation. As a consequence, the "old" form of verifying the competence can be employed that consists of tests. They cover the competences for all departments, functions and levels of responsibility included in the STCW Convention. Relevancies making use of tests have several positive moments, they are following - tests can be quickly updated, objective, simple and all time ready to use, checked quickly. It is important not to disregard the problem of tests designing. In process of multiple choice tests application, it appeared that the problem while designing questions for a test boils down to the problem of creating a question of good quality. The features of proper tests could be following: it should be hard to guess the correct variant, the questions must not contain any misleading tricks - like double negation, they should be 100% accurate, in no case they should contain erroneous information, the topics that tests based on must be essential.

Over the last years the researches have been done in sphere of multiple choice questions when designing professional marine test in English. This based on examination standards facing STCW Convention of Competency, studies at IMEC. When assessing grammar, reading and listening skills, deducing the correct form of words based on the tense of the sentence, deducing meaning from the context, identifying both general and specific information, understanding technical options, following the main points of a discussion, understanding the information content of simple broadcast audio materials about some marine topics, understanding clearly written instruction for a piece of equipment, recognizing the general line of argument in the text only multiple choice questions are utilized when testing both young cadets, and senior officers.

Unchallenged option examinations faced to STCW Competency Certification use multiple choice questions, the testing English for specific purposes, maritime English the same type of testing is used. Discussion on positive and negative features of multiple choice questions still continues. The debate regarding their assessment is dissenting [1, p. III],

The certain advantages of multiple choice questions are easy computerization, administering and marking, checking on factual knowledge, covering the course objectives, gauging the material comprehension of large numbers of students, a broader range of samplings, reliability, validity, differentiation between the study levels, objectivity and scoring consistency. J. R. Dickenson states that “carefully and well-designed multiple choice questions can assess both lower level thinking skills, as recognition and recall, and higher level thinking skills, including the ability to synthesize and integrate the studying material” [2, p. 25].

English testing samples for engineering cadets are based on the multiple choice interrogations, including usually 4 parts of different types of tasks, e.g.:

1) For the first group of interrogations - Find the correct explanation for the word /word combination/ abbreviation, multiple choice questions are used as variants for one abbreviation. *1. CAFS means: a) compressed air facility storage, h) compressed air foam system, c) circulating air foam system'*,

2) Find the correct word for the explanation is presented by multiple choice questions - *1. A control system with feedback loop between its output and its input: a) closed-loop system, b) open-loop system, c) feedback etc.*

3) Grammar skills are monitored also by means of multiple choice questions, the task is Choose the right word for each sentence below. *1. After
_ the level start the jacket water circulating pumps if there is a separate system for main engine. Students have to choose - a) check, b) being checked, c) checking.*

There a lot of variants developed that may be appropriate for maritime education - one correct option out of three or five, multiple true or false options, range of correct options, alternate (stem and two options), matching, assertion- reason (a number of possible solutions with a true/false element), discrete option multiple choice, number right elimination test, randomizing, sequential (depend on answering previous question correctly), selective (option to choice a number of

questions in any one test). All are exertions to gain reliable assessment, small changeableness level, reduce guessing, and increase the probability that scores reflect knowledge. The most common scoring (assessing) methods are number right and negative marking. But such testing method as multiple choice questions supposes liberal scoring, test allows selection one of more than one answer, deleting all alternatives though incorrect, confidence weighting. In general, assessing in multiple choice questions is more objective and impartial, as based on inner experience rather than fact.

Although the teachers and students have ambivalent and conflicting attitude to multiple choice questions for examination [3, p. 23]. L. Holder considers that the challenge lies in difficulties of cognitive assessment, the answers may be guessing, a lot of distractors. In education, authors got a questionable opinion as to effectiveness of multiple choice questions [3, p. 23]. Both those for and against this method of testing argue their respective case persuasively, leading to doubt. Doubt based on incoherency and in secureness has no chance in concluding a mariner competence. Students perceive these tests as unfair, since the correct answers could be guessed or predicted. Multiple choice questions samples may contain wrong statements (for example, technical (engineering) options), and these wrong responses will be judged true. This testing method is not useful to check written skills.

To write, multiple choice items addressing complex thinking skills are more difficult than those intended to survey factual knowledge. However, the effort can be highly rewarded because of the valuable information they can yield quickly about your student's competencies, especially when distractors are skillfully designed to target key weaknesses in novice thinking.

Constructing well-built multiple choice questions is difficult, so there might be future computer assistance in evaluating the quality of multiple choice questions with system identifying the questions difficult, easy, medium and excellent questions, so bad questions (the questions that are weak improve) may be deleted at all.

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