

MINISCORE - A Computer Program for Scoring Multiple Choice Tests and its Relation to Self Learning Assessment Modules (SLAM)

M.D.Buckley-Sharp, F.T.C.Harris

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A variety of programs have been written for the computer scoring of multiple choice questions, but the design of the program alone is not a complete solution to the problems of scoring. The program is only part of a much wider system which must cover methods of accurate data collection, through to suitable dissemination of results. Fortunately, the parts of such systems may be manipulated independently, and we have utilized our own methods of data collection, which have been established for some time, together with our own scoring procedures, to introduce a method of result display which maximises the return of information to students. Because this is only a special method of displaying the candidates' results, all other facilities of our major scoring program can be used concurrently.

We believe that assessment is central to the learning and teaching process, and we have therefore formulated a set of procedures which we call SLAM (Self Learning Assessment Module). SLAM is more flexible than a programmed course, and is easier to set up. Unlike programmed courses, parts of SLAM may be moved or altered independently of other parts. An important part of SLAM is the return of the student's results direct to the student, with the tutor retaining an advisory role.

Note: Here we are continuing our strategic theme of maximising the return on the heavy investment which has to go into writing MCQ (and other forms of assessment). MCQ are usable as direct teaching tools, where the students are offered a set of questions representing the 'curriculum', which they can then use as keys/pegs to direct their own learning. As the tutor cannot determine whether a student has learnt and self-tested, or alternatively looked up every answer, this is not a direct assessment method. But, the tutor, as advisor, is able to identify common misconceptions from eg, the question analysis.