A computer program for banking multiple choice questions

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A new technology of teaching and learning in higher education is developing. This technology, based in large part on multiple choice examining, is already producing important information on the mechanisms of vocational University Education.

At the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, the Research and Service Group for Medical Education is already collaborating with over 70 Departments in Faculties of Medicine throughout Great Britain. A very important part of the information generated by the procedures operated by the group relates to the multiple choice questions themselves and their associated test statistics. In order to manipulate and retrieve this data the Group have developed programs and sets of procedures. This question Bank system is complementary to existing procedures for scoring and analysing examinations. The question Bank program accepts data on cards, or magnetic tape, converting it to a suitable format for a random access file on magnetic disk. A command language structure enables the information to be manipulated with the minimum of coded instructions.

The system is capable of expansion, and also of diversification into other fields, but the optimal level, and type, of computer hardware for its operation is not at present available to us.

The paper describes the method of data recording, and the command language for storing and indexing the data, including a data compression algorithm for this type of data. Search methods include a KWIC command for finding any required text in the database.