

A study of attitude of teachers and students towards open book and closed book assessment

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Abstract

If an examination is to test the information that students have memorized, closed book examinations are appropriate, or if the examination is to test the skills of problem solving and critical thinking, then open book examinations are useful, in which students are allowed to consult their text books and class notes and printed documents. The purpose of this research is to study the attitude of teachers and students towards open book and closed book examination. For this purpose, a sample of 50 teachers and 100 students of CBSE schools were selected from Raipur. Self-made questionnaire was used to collect the relevant data. The results revealed that open book examination should be a part of assessment along with closed book examination as it enhances the thinking skills of the students.

Introduction

Open book assessment is one in which the students are allowed to consult their text book or other approved material while answering the questions. Open book examination can restore the true meaning of the word education for both teachers and students. It will take some time for teachers and students to adapt them with the concept of Open text book assessment. In a closed book examination, the students copy the information from the text book to his memory and then copies it to the answer book. To eliminate this transitional stage of memorization, open book examination is used. An important reason for using open book examination is to promote the right mental sets in both learning and teaching. The result of open book assessment is to stop mugging up or rote learning.

Studies have shown that most of the students find open text book assessment less stressful than closed book examination. It is assumed that open book assessment will emphasize problem solving, creativity or deep knowledge rather than a simple recall. Feller (1994) further suggested that the open book examination is superior to closed book examination as it is more realistic similar to problem solving situation and students are likely to face outside world Elertsen and Valdermo (2000) argued that an open book examination encourages greater engagement and improves understanding of course material. Students prefer open book to closed book examination and find it less stressful (Philips, 2006).CBSE introduced open text book assessment(OTBA) in the summative assessment II for the classes IX and XI in the year 2013.

As per CBSE, the concept of OTBA is meant to incorporate analytical and theoretical skills thus moving away from memorization. An OTBA does not mean students are allowed to take books to the examination hall. In fact, the board will provide case studies to the school much in advance. About 15 to 20 % questions in the paper will be based on this material. This includes questions requiring higher order thinking skills and also value based questions.

OTBA was applicable to all subjects for class IX, while only Economics, Biology and geography for class XI. The teachers assigned the text material received from the CBSE to the students in groups so that they can read and understand through discussions, view it from different perspectives, brainstorm main ideas in the class or even do further research outside the class. The main objective of introducing this element was to

provide opportunities to students to apply theoretical concepts to a real life scenario by encouraging active and group learning in the class.

A review of the literature shows that few studies have been carried out on the present topic. In literature survey by Evaluation and Examination reforms by ministry of HRD in India where practices of NPE (National Policy on Education, 1986) have been discussed. It focuses on the attention to psycho-motor and socio emotional skills assessment. Benefits of open book examination and adoption of system of credits have been some of its recommendations. According to Josette Akresh-Gonzales (2015) most of the students find open book test less stressful than closed book tests. He said that open book questions will emphasize more on problem solving creativity or deeper knowledge rather than a simple recall of facts. K.P. Mohanan(2016) recommended that open book examinations can restore the true meaning of the word education for both teachers and students. If the nature of the examination questions changes, strategies for preparing students to take those examinations will also have to change. It will no longer be enough to paraphrase or simplify the content of the text books in the classroom. Teachers will have to design tasks that will provide exercises for the appropriate mental skills required I each subject.

Objectives of The Study

The objective of this research was to understand the attitude of teachers for open book assessment and closed book exams.

The other objective was to understand the attitude of students for open book assessment and closed book exams.

Sample

A sample for the study was 100 students and 50 school teachers teaching in CBSE schools selected by random sampling method.

Research Methodology

Along with survey method content analysis was also selected.

Tool

A self-made questionnaire was used, formed on the basis of viewpoints presented regarding open book and closed book examinations by teachers and students.

Procedure of the Study

The researcher visited CBSE schools to know the awareness of teachers about the open text book and closed book assessment. A questionnaire was distributed and analyzed as per the responses given by the CBSE school teachers and students. For the content analysis following circulars were also consulted.

According to the circular No. F.11016/2013/KVS (HQ)/JC (ACAD) issued on 10/10/2013, CBSE introduced an element of Open Text Book Assessment (OTBA) for classes IX(all subjects) and XI (Biology, Geography and Economics). Further the circular stated that the subject teacher must go through the textual material and instructions and then he should divide the students into groups and supply copies of material among the groups. The teachers should guide them, provide feedback and encourage open response in solving situations. OTBA covered 15-20% of the SAI or Annual examination.

Findings

Table 1

Response of teachers for open and closed book examination			
Categories of Questions	Yes %	no %	Total
Scores are better in open book exam	75.6	24.4	100
Multiple modes of assessment	83.3	16.7	100
Helping the students to argument logically	90.6	9.4	100
Inclusion of Value based Question	90	10	100
Long Term retention	0	100	100

On the basis of questionnaire, 75.6% of teachers agreed that the scores obtained in open book assessment differ from scores obtained in closed book examination. 83.3% of the teachers admitted that the initiative by CBSE to have multiple modes of assessment helps the students to strengthen their thinking ability. 90.6% of the teachers agreed that open book examinations are helping the students to present his/her arguments logically and coherently. Most of the teachers favored the inclusion of value based questions and questions of higher order thinking skills. All teachers agreed that for long term retention, open book exams may not be helpful. Mohanan (2016) also found the same results.

Graph 1

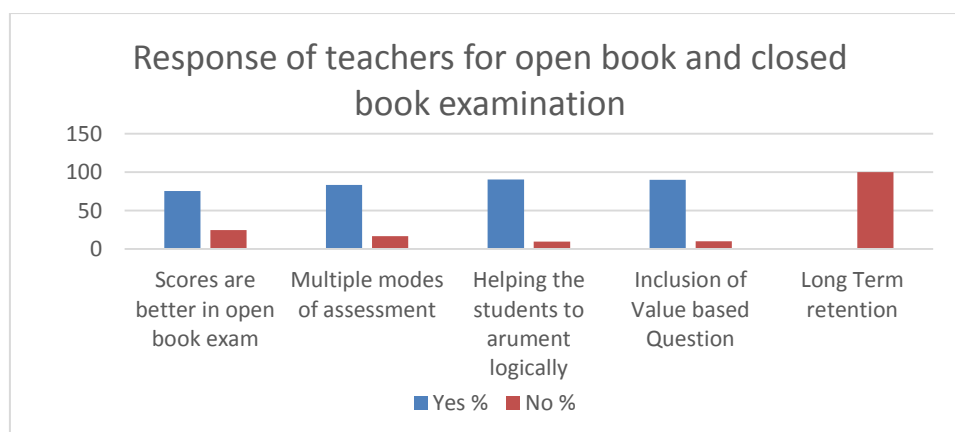


Table 2

Response of students for open and closed book examination			
Categories of Questions	Yes %	no %	Total
Scores are better in open book exam	65	35	100
Multiple modes of assessment	74	26	100
Helping the students to argument logically	86.3	13.7	100
Inclusion of Value based Question	86.6	13.4	100
Long Term retention	4	96	100

As per Table No. 2, 65% of students are of the opinion that their scores are better in open book exams. 74% students favored multiple modes of assessment, as initiated by CBSE, is helping them to enhance their thinking skills. 86.3 % of the students admitted that OTBA are meant to incorporate analytical and theoretical skills, thus moving away from memorization. Majority of the students (86.6%) admitted that open book examinations are helping them to present their arguments logically and coherently. 96% of the students favored that open book examinations don't help in long term retention.

Graph 2

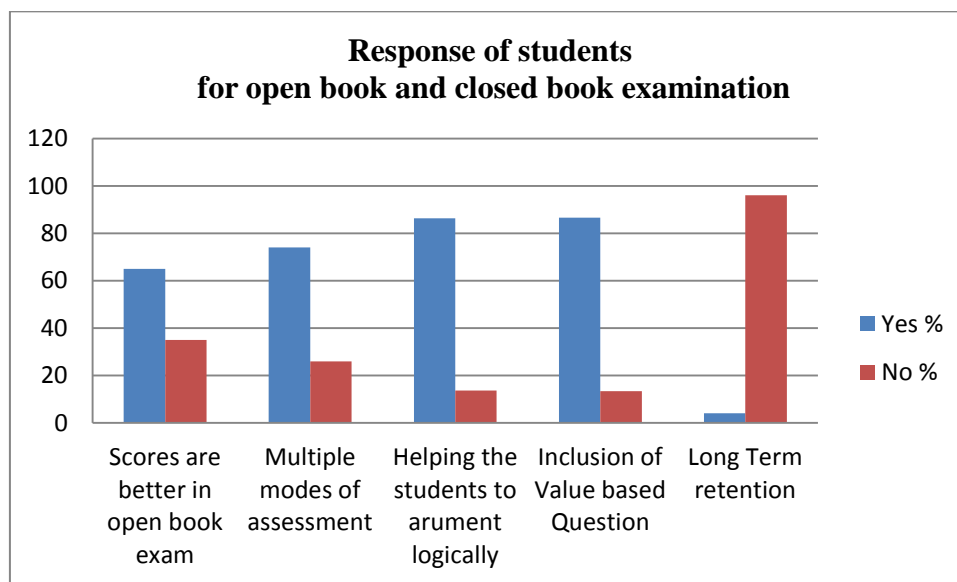


Table 3

List of the CBSE Circular issued in the academic year 2014-15

S.No.	Circular No.	Ref. No	Dated	Subject
1	F.11016/2013/KVS(HQ)/JC(ACAD)	CBSE/CM/2013	10/10/2013	Introduction of Open Text Book Assessment for class IX-SA II & for Class XI
2	Acad-39/2013	CBSE/CM/2013	31/05/2013	Introduction of Open Text-based Assessment in the Summative Assessment II of Class IX and in the Annual Examination of Class XI, March, 2014

Looking at Table No. 3, on analyzing the CBSE circulars it was found that as the board recommends that multiple modes of assessment need to be provided to cater to the varied abilities of individual strengths of learners. It is, therefore, decided to introduce an element of Open Text- based Assessment to incorporate analytical and theoretical skills, thus moving away from memorization.

Conclusion

To meet the changing demands of the society, education has to cater to the individual differences of the learners to build such individuals who can compete in today's world with his/her knowledge and skills by thinking critically, applying knowledge to new situations, analyzing information, comprehending new ideas, communicating, collaborating, solving problems and making better decisions. For creating such individuals,

we need to follow such an approach which is more student-centered and advocates the creation of knowledge instead of acquiring knowledge. For long term retention, teachers and students are of the opinion that open text books are not helpful.

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