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ARE ORAL EXAMS THE WAY TO GO?

Abstract:

What is the best way to test the knowledge of university students? After having a traditional written final exam for years in the course Consumer Behaviour at the University of Akureyri, it was decided to change things up and have an oral final exam instead. The students had so far indicated that they found the material difficult and that it was hard to prepare for the final written exam. The assessment of the course was changed, but previously the final exam weighted 65-70% of the final grade. The number of study components was increased, projects weighed a total of 50% of the final grade and the oral exam 50%.

But what did the students think? Was it better or easier in any way to prepare for an oral exam? And if the students could choose, would they prefer a written or oral final exam? In the presentation results from research will be presented. A questionnaire was sent to all students who took the final oral exam, the response rate was 49%. 42% of the students felt that they were better at answering the questions in the oral exam than in a traditional written exam. As one student observed: "I felt that it was easier to express what I was thinking, than to write it e.g. in essay questions." Overall, the students were doing well and a large proportion of the students, 46%, said that if they could choose, they would choose an oral final exam, while almost a third, 31%, would choose a written final exam.

Keywords:

Oral exams, students, university, teaching

JEL Classification: I21, A00, I29