

Plato and Platonism. Monash University, School of Philosophy and Bioethics. Semester 2, 2007.

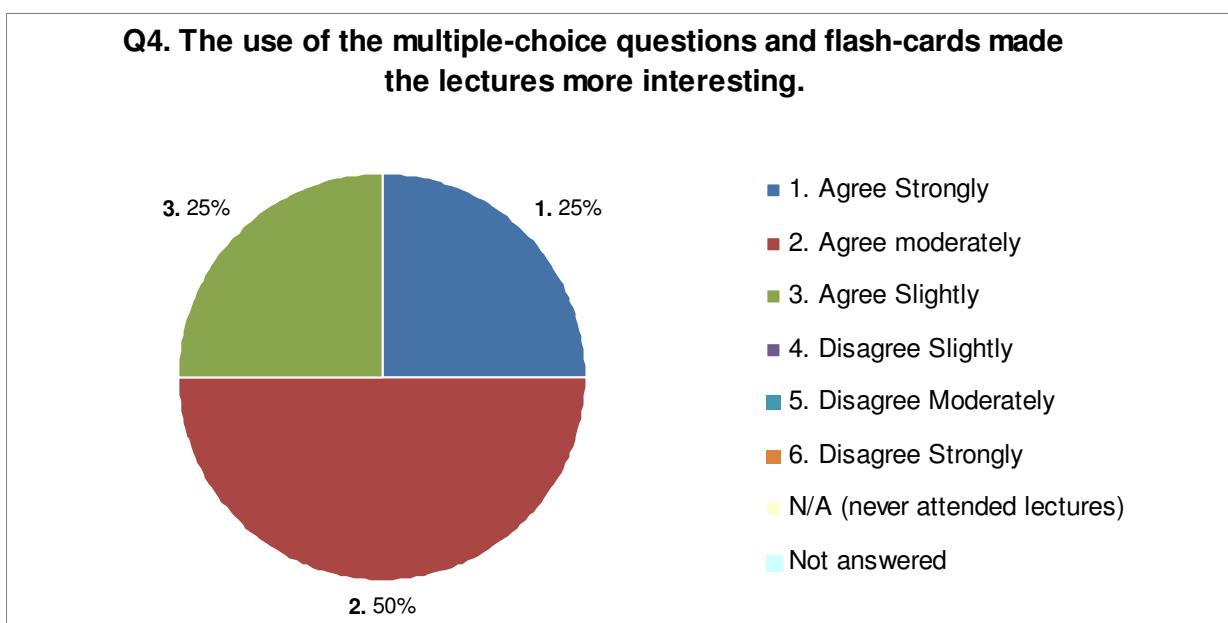
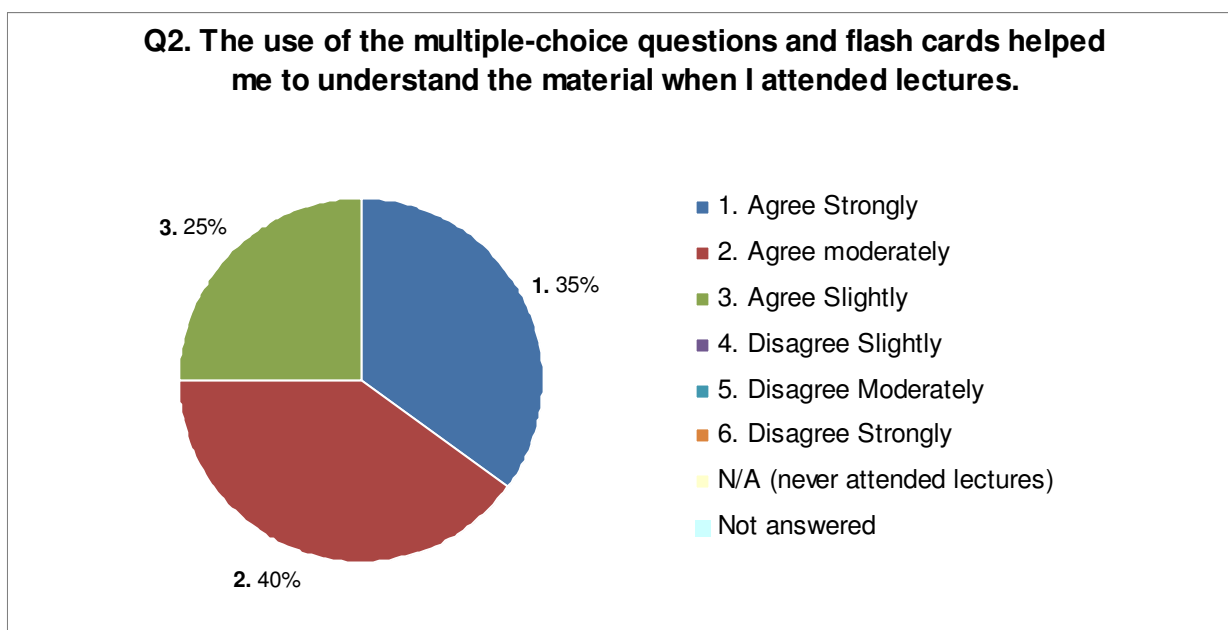
Description

Peer Instruction was used in the lectures for a second year philosophy course, *Plato and Platonism*. Approximately 2-3 questions were used per lecture. 20 students completed the questionnaire, representing 47% of the total enrolment of 43.

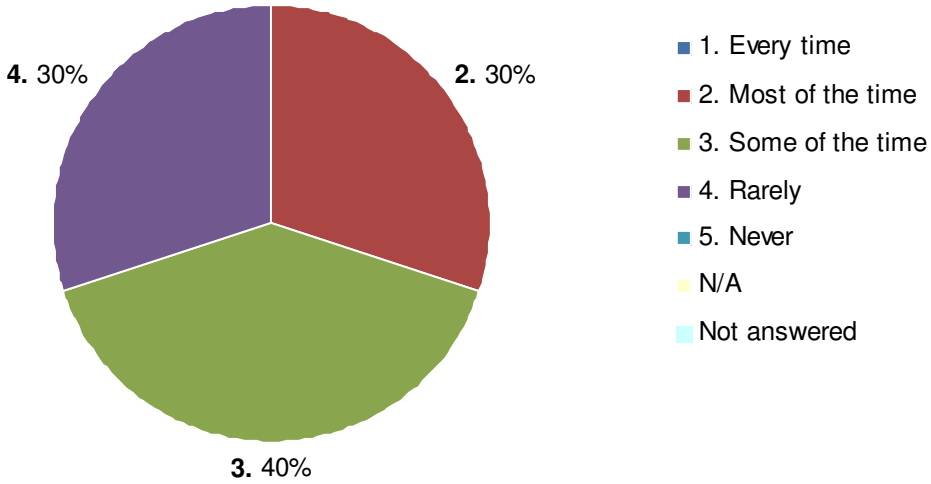
Summary

Below are the results from five key questions on the questionnaire.

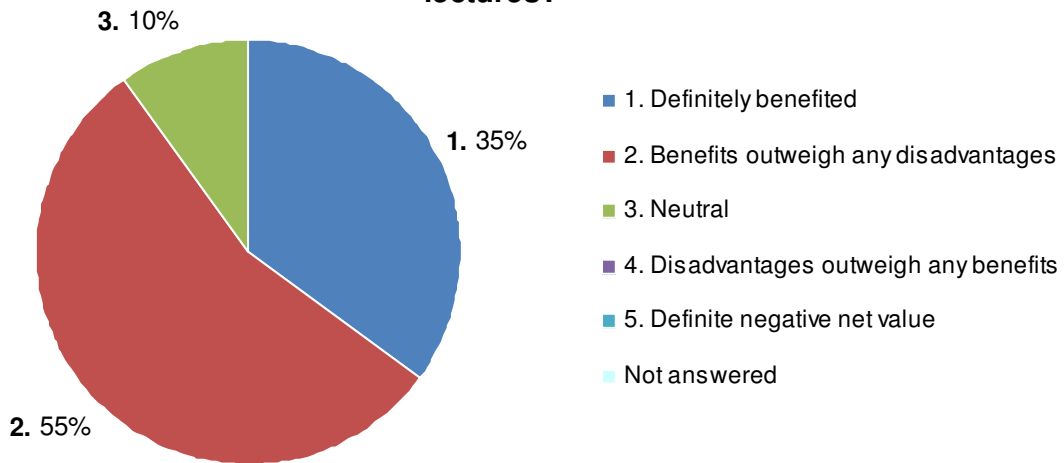
Response rate: 20 students (47%).



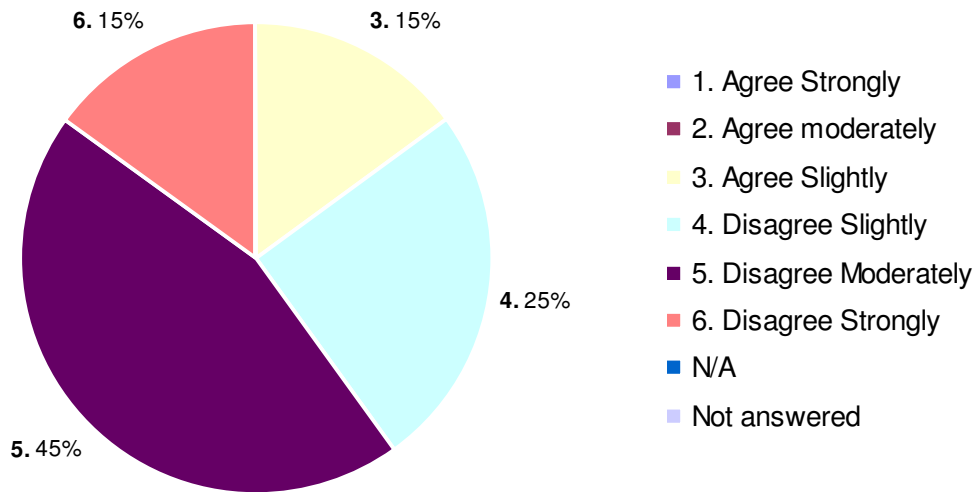
Q6. The discussions with fellow students helped to improve my understanding of the topic



Q12. What (for you) was the balance of benefit vs. disadvantage from the use of the multiple-choice questions and flash cards in the lectures?



Q15. The time taken up in lectures with quiz questions and discussions would be just as well (or better) spent if the lecturer taught the material in the usual way.



Sample comments

Benefits

Interaction and engagement (6/16 comments)

- Engaging with material.
- They were interactive and encouraged me to actively engage with the course material.
- Active involvement in material rather than just sitting and listening.
- Gave opportunity to think about question instead of passively receiving "right" answer.

Improved attention (4/16 comments)

- It made the lectures more interesting and it helped break up lectures into reasonable sections.
- They made the lecture more interesting. It kept me focused and helped me to think about the lecture material instead of just letting it wash over me.

Improved understanding (3/16 comments)

- Broke up the lecture and gave us a chance to properly understand the material in the lecture.
- Ability to engage with the material, particularly as a multiple choice question usually identifies common misconceptions.
- Reinforcement of points in lecture. Opportunity to formulate own ideas on topic before given the answer by lecturer.

Useful feedback (3/16 comments)

- Able to gauge for myself how much I understood content and whether there was anything I was lacking.
- Get to see if others are as clueless as me, there's a certain amount of comfort in that.

Disadvantages or problems

No disadvantages (3/14 comments)

- None.
- None, good idea.

Questions too long or too hard (3/14 comments)

- Questions sometimes take a greater amount of time to understand.
- Sometimes the questions were long, making it a bit hard to grasp quickly.

Not enough time given to think (2/14 comments)

- Lack of time to think about the questions properly sometimes.
- Only think I needed more time to think about the options.

Takes up time (2/14 comments)

- Too little time, felt rushed and it took time away from lecture.
- Took some time to get info to sink in so I could answer the question.

Discussions with peers not useful (1/14 comments)

- I didn't like the discussion that much. I found most students, myself included, didn't know the material well enough to properly justify our answers.

Embarrassed when answered incorrectly (1/14 comments)

- Might be self conscious if I didn't know the answer.

Other comments

Positive (3/7 comments)

- Very suitable teaching method for philosophy.
- Useful b/c it made me tune in, broke monotony of lecture.
- I think they help keep interest during the lecture. And for me they woke me up during sometimes boring lectures.

Neutral (3/7 comments)

- With longer lectures, it would allow for more thinking time.
- They go ok.
- Being given a copy of the questions and answers would have been helpful. Perhaps on a separate sheet at the end of the lecture.

Negative (1/7 comments)

- Most questions were good but some I thought was unnecessary (when most people got the answers right)