Are Hot Potato exercises useful as a form of revision

Una Moroney and Stephanie Leonard, Intermediate School, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

HOT POTATOES

Hot Potatoes can be used to create Web-based interactive exercises which can be delivered to any Internet-connected computer equipped with a browser. The data for the exercises (questions, answers, responses etc.) are entered and a button pressed. The program will then create the Web pages which can be linked to an existing school web site. The JQuiz program creates multiple choice quizzes. Specific feedback can be provided both for right answers and predicted wrong answers. The JCross program creates crossword puzzles which can be completed online. The JMatch programme creates matching or ordering exercises. A list of fixed items appears on the left (these can be pictures or text), with jumbled items on the right. This can be used for matching vocabulary to pictures or translations, or for ordering sentences to form a sequence or a conversation. can then be uploaded to your server. The JCloze program creates gap-fill exercises the JMix program creates jumbled-sentence exercises
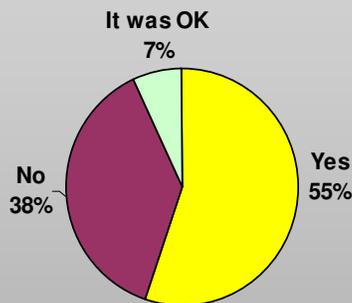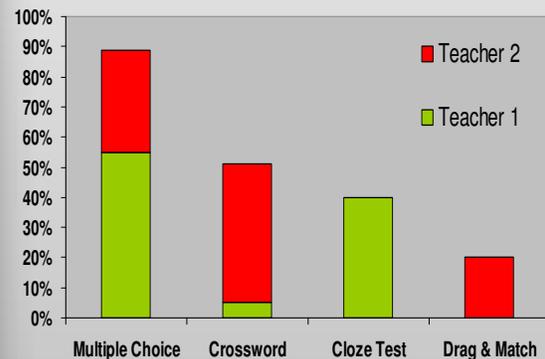
WHAT WE DID

At the end of teaching a topic we designed a 'hot potato' exercise. These exercises were posted on the school website and students were asked to complete them. We then posted an on-line survey to find out what the students thought. We used four types of programmes, The JQuiz, JCross, JMatch and JCloze.

WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Did you enjoy completing the hot potatoes activity?

It was OK 7%
No 38%
Yes 55%

Type of Hot Potato exercise preferred

- Teacher 1 – did not produce a Drag & Match
- Teacher 2 – did not produce a Cloze Test

SOME STUDENTS COMMENTS

Drag and match very hard to use

I like crosswords.... ☺ They're FUN!!!!!

These were very useful in doing my revision and I think that if we got more of these type of revision exercises even on paper then it would be very useful.

Brilliant way to study little bits at a time to keep your brain focused, and a test for yourself to see what you know and don't know.

Yeah, thought this was really good especially the quiz. I thought it helped especially when given tips if an answer was wrong! Thanks.

Other Questions asked	Responses		
	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Have you completed an on-line survey before?	31%	69%	0%
Have the on-line crosswords and quizzes helped in learning of topic?	92%	0%	8%
Would on-line exercises be more useful as a form of revision than assessment?	85%	12%	3%
Would you prefer on-line exercises to the standard type i.e. written questions in class?	75%	19%	6%

CONCLUSION

The vast majority of the students surveyed found that the hot potatoes on-line exercises helped in their learning and revision of the topics. The majority stated they would prefer this type of exercise to the standard written questions in class. The multiple choice quizzes proved the most popular of the types tested followed by the crossword. The Drag and Match proved to be the least preferred option.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Placing the exercise on our school web-site did not provide us with an opportunity to access student scores for the various exercises. Placing these exercises on MOODLE would solve this problem..
These exercises would not be suitable as the only revision method for exam preparation.