Learn Quiz Results

I have no formal comparison for this project – it’s the first time I’ve offered HUM108 online, so I can’t draw any direct comparisons to past student performance levels. However, I am extremely pleased with how well these Learn Quizzes functioned in the beginning of this course.

One of the hardest things about HUM108 is that it’s an introductory level course, but it demands that students have some knowledge of 19-century humanities in order to understand the Modern period that starts this Contemporary Humanities course. By using the Learn Quizzes, I was able to harness my students’ love of quizzes and surveys and turn it into a teachable moment. I included specific content in the questions:

* For example, here’s one of the quiz questions: One more major contributor to the development of Modernism was the field of psychology, which explored the way people viewed their own reality.

Sigmund Freud was the first to gaze inwardly and to discover a world within where dynamic, often warring forces shape the individual's psyche and personality. To explain this internal world within each of us, he developed a complex theory of the unconscious that illustrated the importance of unconscious motivation in behavior and the proposition that psychological events can go on outside of conscious awareness. And so, according to Freud, fantasies, dreams, and slips of the tongue are outward manifestations of unconscious motives. Furthermore, in explaining the development of personality, Freud expanded man's definition of sexuality to include oral, anal, and other bodily sensations. Thus his legacy to the modern world was to expose a darker side of man that had been hidden from view by the hypocrisy of 19th-century society.  "History of Modernism."

Based on this passage, which of the following would be examples of Modernism reacting to the exposure of a darker side of humanity?  (Select all correct answers)

* Nudity/partial nudity in painting and performance
* Abstract art, which attempts to create a depiction of the inability of our senses to express the truth of the human condition
* Flattering portraits of royalty and nobility
* Explorations to find ways to access the unconscious mind of the artist

Every student was able to determine that all the answers except “Flattering portraits” were correct. This was easy for them, because they had just read a short discussion of the topic. However, this is a much higher success rate than I would have expected if I had assigned the reading beforehand. What was impressive was how many (well over half) of the students referred to this material in their Modern Art assignments, which came the week after they took this quiz; their Modern Art assignments asked them to analyze a piece of modern art, but didn’t require them to use any specific approach.

I take that to mean that this quiz approach was successful because this quiz is the only place in the course where they were exposed to this material. I’m looking forward to making use of this technique in the future.