**MC Practice**

Before we begin MC practice, we have been analyzing poetry in preparation for writing essays. I begin by giving them poems without prompts and having them determine how the poet creates meaning, so they are forced to look for devices and determine subject and meaning. We then work on FRQ 1 prompts without writing the essay. Once they have written their first essay, we begin working with multiple choice.

**Day 1**

1. Distribute poem (“A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body”) and allow students to read/annotate it for 5 minutes.
2. Distribute MC questions and allow students the # of minutes equal to the # of questions. I have students bubble and All in Learning answer sheet as well as marking their answers on the questions.
3. Collect everything.
4. Score bubble sheets to determine groups for the following day. Create groups of 3 with each including a high-, middle-, and low-scoring student. (I don’t tell the students how I grouped them.)

**Day 2**

1. Have desks arranged in numbered groups and the groups listed on the board as students walk in the door to save time. Instruct students to discuss the questions and reach a consensus regarding the answer for each question. Additionally, EVERY STUDENT must write down the specific supporting evidence from the poem. Line numbers are not sufficient. I have found that forcing them to do this transfers to supporting their assertions when they write essays. Some of the try to tell me they’ll remember what they discussed—no need to write it down. My response? “What if I decide to wait a week to discuss the answers? Will you still remember?” That’s a no.
2. Instruct students to have one member of each group log into Socrative and enter the answers. Project the results screen with the answers hidden. From the drop-down box, choose to show progress, rather than the scores. For the first MC practice, most groups will move at about the same pace, but it is always wise to have another assignment that students can be working on if you have to wait for one or two slower groups. Of course, walking around and monitoring will help them stay on task. Some groups, however, are on task and just take more time discussing the questions. I don’t like to rush them.
3. When all groups have entered their answers, go through the questions and reveal the answers one at a time. Ask groups who answered correctly to explain the correct response using the text. You can see the percentage correct and incorrect answers as well as the incorrect answers that are chosen. The data provide helpful information regardless of whether students answered correctly or incorrectly.

**Moving Forward**

1. I repeat the same process with another poem about two weeks later. This time, I give them the poem and questions at the same time, and I give them the # of minutes equal to the # of questions to complete the assignment (no extra time with the poem before beginning the questions).
2. About two weeks later, I give them a two-poem multiple-choice practice and repeat the process.
3. After we have worked with prose passages and they have written a FRQ 2 essay, I begin the process anew with a prose passage and MC questions.
4. Before first semester is over, I try to give them one or two practices with a poem and a prose passage.

**Second Semester**

1. The first MC practice of the semester is actually a full-length test, but I divide it into two days of 30 minutes each. I also print the test so that on the first day they do the poems on the test, and on the second day they do the prose passages. This method helps some of them realize they perform better if they do all of one type of question before doing the other type. Many of them would never attempt this on their own—even if I suggested it—because they are so rooted in answering the questions in order. Since I’m now dealing with 55 questions, I’m not in a big hurry to scan it and form the groups. I might let several days pass before we begin to discuss the questions. Even then, I usually have them discuss only the poems or the prose passages in a period and usually let another day or two pass before discussing the other half. If they are doing what they need to be doing, this is a brain-draining activity.
2. Beginning second semester, instead of going over every question together as a class, I provide feedback to each group after they enter their answers. They have to re-answer what they miss and explain to me why they missed it the first time and how they determined the correct answer. This one is a bit more difficult to manage, so I make sure to give an assignment for students to work on while they are waiting for me to circle around to them. Of course, you can always structure your groups so that they are in homogeneous ability levels, and you will know who is going to need the most attention. You can then give an enrichment assignment to the students who will not need you as much. This is what I do as we get closer to the test.