

Assessment for learner self-regulation: Enhancing achievement in the first year using learning technologies

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While there is considerable research on the first year experience, much less has been written about the role of assessment and feedback on that experience. This paper explores how formative assessment and feedback practices might be used to enhance the first year experience and enable students to develop the skills needed for self-regulated learning. It also explores how technology might support formative assessment practices in the current higher education context, where modularisation, larger student numbers and lower staff-student ratios have all reduced opportunities for formative support. A framework is proposed for the design of large-cohort first year courses based on two recent literature reviews. This provides a lens through which to analyse two large-cohort first-year courses (Psychology and French) that were redesigned with funding from the Re-engineering Assessment Practices (REAP) project. Evaluations showed that both course redesigns resulted in high levels of student satisfaction, some performance improvements in the exams when compared to the previous years, and workload efficiency gains brought about by the application of technology. Ways of improving on these designs based on the proposed framework are discussed.

Keywords: formative assessment, feedback, self-regulation, first year experience, student success, technology