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Formative assessment works - A Case study exploring the use of on line formative assessment and formative feedback.

Original Citation

Snowden, Michael and Daley-Yates, Sue (2013) Formative assessment works - A Case study exploring the use of on line formative assessment and formative feedback. In: HEA/SEEC Conference Recognising promoting and developing flexible learning in HE., 22nd-23rd July 2013, University of Westminster, London. (Unpublished)

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WHAT WE LEARNED

The provision of online formative feedback had a significant positive influence upon the learning experience and assessment performance of our cohort of students
Social and cultural factors influenced engagement and the online learning experience
Institutional factors have a significant effect upon the implementation and provision of online feedback

BACKGROUND

Higher education requires educators to be responsive to the needs of the student community. In an ever increasing performance driven and consumerist culture, proven, effective strategies to enhance the learning experience must be adopted.

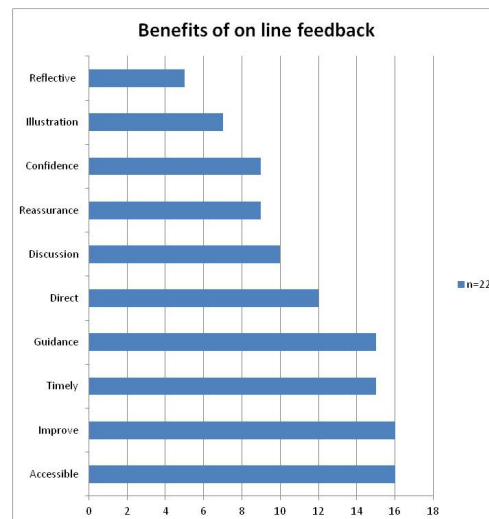
OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate the effectiveness of introducing online formative assessment and feedback on learning and assessment performance.
- Explore social, cultural and institutional influences that impact upon online feedback and assessment.

METHODS

An ethnographic case study approach was adopted following a cohort of 22 students who studied a 40 credit (level 6) module at a remote campus over a period of one academic year. Data collection tools included a focus group and semi structured interviews, questionnaire and student assessment data. Assessment performance data was compared to cohorts studying the same module in previous and current years where online formative assessment was not available.

RESULTS



KEY THEMES

Enhanced student performance and satisfaction; mean grade score was enhanced by 8%. Students expressed 100% satisfaction with assessment and feedback in USS. Flexible delivery driven by demands of students; e.g. NUS Student Charter 2010. Welcomed especially by students with family and work commitments, due to accessibility of feedback online. Promoted active and reflective engagement with feedback and facilitated constructive use of 'face to face' feedback. Students demonstrated enhanced performance in terms of subject knowledge and improved academic skills ability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutional commitment to e-learning strategy to enable success for both students and teachers. Flexible delivery and operating mechanisms and effective use of VLE. Clear guidance provided to students e.g. expectations, return time and areas for feedback. Collaborative feedback. Clear outline of roles in relation to responsibility: academic and academic skills support.

