

## **Learning and Teaching Conference 2012**

Abstract 4B

### **Regular Formative Assessment on a Large Scale – Practicalities, Problems and Benefits**

Presenter: Suzanne McCallum, Business School

Co-author: Margaret Milner, Business School

A key goal in first year is to help students make the transition into Higher Education and adapt to a system where they are expected to monitor and evaluate their own learning. One way to shift the locus of control of their learning is to provide regular formative assessment opportunities at an early stage. Research by Yorke (2001) has shown that formative assessment in the early weeks of first year is associated with student success.

Looking at the Glasgow experience, results of the National Student Survey and general discussions with students clearly show that students want more feedback on their work. With ever increasing class sizes this is becoming more difficult. However, with information from the academic literature and from students themselves highlighting the need for more formative assessment in year 1, semester 1 - the course co-ordinators of the 2 relevant accounting & finance modules decided to implement a series of regular formative assessment quizzes. In order to make this process manageable (given each course has 120-160 students and only one member of staff) Moodle was selected as a tool to provide e-assessment quizzes.

This session reflects on the implementation of this project, including the benefits and problems of introducing the quizzes and considers student feedback on the success of this exercise. As is often the case there were problems encountered and action research techniques were utilised to consider ways to improve the project in its second year: for instance, it was apparent that students needed more information on data entry to help build confidence and trust in the assessment system.

Feedback from students has been very positive and they seem to perceive a definite benefit from the formative assessment quizzes. Information presented should allow attendees to evaluate the potential benefit of adopting a similar technique on their course.

### **References**

Nicol, D. 2009 Transforming assessment and feedback: enhancing integration and empowerment in first year, *Quality Enhancement Themes Report on The First Year Experience*

Yorke, M. 2001 Formative Assessment and its Relevance to Retention *Higher Education Research and Development* Vol 20 No 2 pp115-126

**Outcomes**

- Understand the value of formative assessment in year 1 semester 1 courses as an aid to learning transitions;
- Understand how Moodle can be used to help facilitate formative assessment in a large class;
- Consider the use of Moodle (on their own course) as an e-assessment tool which aids formative feedback.