

2014

Wikis

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Assessment & Feedback Use Cases

WIKIS

Author: Claire McDonnell

Date: 2014

This use case describes how one assessment method was designed and implemented by a lecturer or a group of lecturers in DIT. The use case was compiled from an interview conducted as part of **DIT's RAFT project (2013-14)**, the aim of which was to provide a database of assessment practices designed and implemented by academic staff across DIT.



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Lecturer

Claire McDonnell

Programme and year on which assessment was offered

BSc Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Year 3

Description

Students work in groups and design a collaborative Wiki (PBWorks) based on a chemical molecule of choice. The choice of molecule is restricted to ones supplied by the lecturer. The groups form on their own and the majority of the work takes place outside of contact hours. The lecturer can monitor student engagement and activity through the Wiki history. Mid way through the assessment period (week three of a six week assessment window), the academic provides written feedback on the progress of the students' Wiki by posting to the Wiki. The best Wikis may be entered into an external competition for "molecule of the month". An individual score is awarded, based on a grading rubric. This grade contributes 40% of the overall module mark.

Why did you use this Assessment?

It prepares students for their final year project by introducing them to correctly researching information, correctly referencing, and in particular improving the student academic writing style. The students' tone and audience appreciation is also addressed. The constant issue of plagiarism is also discussed and the use of the Wiki allows students to appreciate plagiarism, as the "molecule of the month" is a peer-reviewed process where plagiarism is not accepted.

Why did you change to this form of assessment?

A similar group assessment was used; however, it was difficult to monitor who was contributing to the group and who was not.

How do you give feedback to students?

Feedback is provided to students mid-way through the Wiki production and is in the form of written comments on the student Wiki page.

What have you found are the advantages of using this form of assessment?

- Clear and transparent who is working (or not)
- Page history is very useful
- Real time monitoring of student work

What have you found are the dis-advantages of using this form of assessment?

Time to set up and moderate

If another lecturer was using this assessment method would you have any tips for them?

- Do: Assess and review as you go.
- Don't: Use a Wiki just for the sake of using a Wiki. It needs to sit into the assessment and enhance it.

Do you have any feedback from students about this assessment?

Initially the students are unaware of what a Wiki is; they may think that Wikipedia is the only Wiki. However, once they understand how a Wiki works (through an initial workshop style class), the students appreciate the open and transparent nature of the Wiki. Those who contribute most are clearly evident, as are those that do little. This aids in getting the group to work productively and collaboratively. The technology doesn't appear to be a problem for the students. An external Wiki site (PBWorks) is used as an alternative to the Webcourses hosted Wiki for the improved functionality and user experience.