

4A Who uses online educational resources and do they help students learn?

Presenters: Jason Bohan, Sarah Walsh, Helena Paterson and Niamh Stack, Psychology

Blended learning integrates traditional face-to-face teaching with on-line resources and has been extensively adopted in Higher Education because it can, for example, efficiently meet the needs of the large class sizes often found in first year classes (George-Walker & Keefe, 2010).

The use of on-line formative assessments in particular is attractive to many course organisers because it effectively enhances and extends teaching delivery and allows greater flexibility for teachers and learners. It is believed that blended learning promotes reflection, deeper processing and understanding of the subject, greater independence in the learning process, and that this will be evidenced in higher exam grades and retention rates (see Cooner, 2010; George-Walker & Keefe, 2010; López-Pérez, Pérez-López, Rodríguez-Ariza, Lázaro, 2011).

Whilst many students readily engage with on-line resources, many also do not. Bohan & Stack (2014) reported that less than half of a large first year psychology class readily engaged with on-line homework assignments, despite the fact that most students reported that they believed they would benefit from completing the exercises. Individual differences in academic goals and self-concept, must have an impact on why some students engage with, and benefit from, online resources, and others do not.

In this paper we report the results of a study investigating whether there is an academic benefit for regular users of online weekly homework assignments, as reflected in higher course grades, compared to non-users. In addition, we compared users and non-users of these resources on a number of different measures, such as academic self-confidence, autonomy, and test anxiety scales, predicting that users of these resources would score higher than non-users.

We will discuss whether a blended learning approach benefits student learning and how we can encourage more students to engage with these resources.

References

Bohan, J., and Stack, N. (2014). Do weekly on-line homework assignments promote student engagement and enhance learning in first year psychology students? *The Psychology of Education Review*, Volume 38, No.2

Cooner, T. (2010). Creating opportunities for students in large cohorts to reflect in and on practice: lessons learnt from a formative evaluation of students' experiences of a technology-enhanced blended learning design. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 41(2), 271-286

George-Walker, L. and Keefe, M. (2010) Self-determined blended learning: a case study of blended learning design, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 29:1,1-13

López-Pérez, Pérez-López, and Rodríguez-Ariza, Lázaro, (2011). Blended Learning in higher education: Students' perceptions and their relation to outcomes. *Computers & Education*, 56, pp 818-826.