

Useless online student quizzes

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Online quizzes are not helping students learn their subject, according to a study just published in the *International Journal of Information and Operations Management Education*.

Online quizzes have been introduced to offset larger class sizes allowing students to self test and educators to evaluate student performance with reduced effort. However, Harm-Jan Steenhuis and Brian Grinder of the College of Business and Public Administration, at Eastern Washington University, Spokane and Erik Joost de Bruijn of the School of Management and Governance, at the University of Twente, in Enschede, The Netherlands have demonstrated that for students undertaking an operations management course, online quizzes are not as useful as some educators might think.

Information and communications technologies in the educational environment fall into two distinct categories. In the first, ICT is used for instructional purposes. In the second, for testing. In this latter category, online quizzes are increasingly popular as tools for testing student knowledge and skills and also as formative tools to help teachers mould the curriculum to fit the learning progress of the students. By adopting this latter approach, educators hope to improve student knowledge and grades.

However, Steenhuis and colleagues have found that this approach does not necessarily work and despite the fact that students perceive such quizzes as helpful, they may not be as useful to learning as both students and educators believe.

The team investigated the behavior and performance of students using online quizzes. They found that overall student grades were not improved by the formative online quizzes. Moreover, despite answer controls and time delays built into the quizzes that were meant to encourage additional study between attempts at the quiz, the students did not modify their behavior.

The study also answered one additional question: Do courses that use online quizzes perform better than courses without online quizzes?

By comparing exam results and final grades statistically the team found that there was no significant difference between the course that used online quizzes and the one that did not. "Our conclusion raises questions about the use of online quizzes as an effective course design element to improve [student](#) learning," the researchers say.

More information: "The use(lessness) of online quizzes for achieving student learning" in Int. J. Information and Operations Management Education, 2009, 3, 119-148

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