

e-Assessment Case Studies: Update 2nd December 2005

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Introduction

This project set out to extend the understanding of what e-Assessment means to users and producers in the HE and FE sectors by collecting a set of 15 cases studies. The first phase of the project consisted of identifying areas of innovative practice and developing a methodology for the study. This was completed on time.

The next phase involved piloting our case study methodology at our two home sites i.e. the Open and Derby Universities. The methodology was refined after the pilot work was analysed. We are now in phase three of the project, which is the main data collection phase. All the case study data will be collected by the end of January.

The final month of the project, i.e. phase four, will involve a meta analysis of the projects and the write up of the project. The key findings from our work to date are listed below and we are on schedule to achieve our major targets by March 2006

Landscape Study

A spreadsheet documenting work being carried out in the HE and FE sectors has been compiled from both this and the Road map project. Over 60 sites of interest have been identified, including some commercial enterprises. (Please find attached spreadsheet file). We have been trying to track down a company that has produced some key skill software for the general public for one of our case studies and we are now talking to Calibrand. This company has successfully implemented the British Citizenship online test.

Piloting the Methodology

Two of the sites selected, as case studies, were the OU and Derby Universities. They were chosen because we knew there was innovative and sustained work occurring in both these sites over a number of years. We decided to use them to pilot the interview schedules together with the range and number of personnel that should be approached to gain sufficient information for this study.

We have refined the methodology in the following way:

- The participants will be sent the main issues that we want to discuss before the interview (see Appendix 2)
- Four key personnel will be interviewed at each site. These include:
 - Lead academic
 - Software developer
 - Member of the management team with responsibility for e-learning
 - Student who has used the application

Each case study will be written up with a three page summary with the addition of bullet point details from all recorded interviews. Figure 1 below illustrates a number of cycles that are embedded within the e-assessment process and our meta analysis, of all 15 case studies, will be guided by this framework.

Cycles of e-assessment

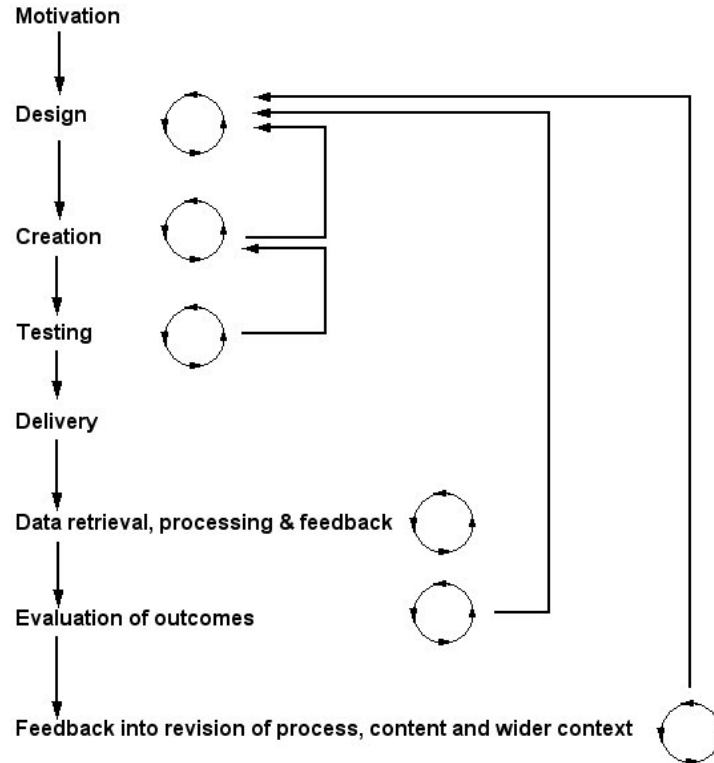


Figure 1: Diagram to illustrate cycles of e- Assessment

Selection of Case Studies

Sites have been selected in England, Scotland and Wales (see Table 1 below). Interviews have been completed or arranged for December 05 or January 06. We are still struggling with Northern Ireland. We have also collected data from an NVQ site. This was Warwickshire College where summative e –assessment was embedded with traditional learning materials for students in remote locations. Themes have been identified for some cases studies which mean we will be visiting more than 15 sites. Again all details can be found in the table below.

Table 1: Site Visits

UK Region		Name of Institution	Key point of interest	Dates
Scotland	HE	University of Dundee	Online accredited modules in e-assessment for staff development and evidence of improved student performance in medicine and life sciences	6.12.05
Scotland	FE	Stow College	The COLA project which is building a national databank of formative e-assessments for Scottish FE – I lead the technical group for this project.	5.12.05
			The SOLAR project which is the Scottish Qualification Authority's initiative to build a national databank of summative e-assessments for the Scottish curriculum.	5.12.05
Scotland	HE	Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh	PASS-IT Assessment Engine, reporting system	7.12.05
Wales	HE	Cardiff Dental School	Yr2 of Dentistry course. Regular motivational assessments in oral pathology using images of pathological problems. Allows students to connect with practical examples to support theoretical studies.	TBA
Wales + England	HE	University of Glamorgan + University College London	Themed study on confidence-based testing	6.12.05
Wales	FE	Coleg Sir Gar	Collaborated with Edexcel to establish online assessment	TBA
Northern Ireland	HE	University of Ulster	Student retention + continuous e-assessment + evidence for improvement in student performance over previous methods in chemistry.	January 2006
Northern Ireland	FE	East Antrim College	Contact just received. As yet unaware of current e-assessment practice	TBA
England	HE	University of Loughborough	Early adopter and hosts assessments across the University - may be thematic with other institutions adopting similar mechanisms - Plymouth/Southampton etc.	12.12.05
England	FE	West Suffolk College	Use of mobile learning technology in practical real time assessment of chef training	12.12.05
England	FE	Warwickshire College	Vocational qualification summative e-assessment embedded with traditional distance learning materials for students in remote locations	10.11.05 completed
England	n/a	Cambridge Assessment	External examining boards progress and developments with e-assessment	TBA
England	HE	University of Derby	Early adopter - Central support and production department, large scale cross institutional, long history, tools development, multidisciplinary, both formative and summative assessment including formal exams, embedded in University strategies. Examples wrt retention and professional training	3.11.05 completed
England	HE	The Open University	Feedback to students and tutors on formative assessment	October 2005 completed
England	HE	University of London, Birkbeck College	OLAAP Project. A project focussed on the design and delivery of high quality feedback in e-assessment	8.12.05-day UCL, 8.12.05-evening Birkbeck
England	HE	University of Shampton /Loughborough / Plymouth	Thematic, institutional use of commercial e-assessment software mostly by individual tutors across each institution	10.1.2006-S'ton 15.1.06-P'mouth 12.12.05-L'boro

England	CPD	Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Trust	E-assessment and e-learning in Medicines Administration for practising Nurses where guidelines change frequently	TBA
England	CPD	Calibrand	British Citizenship Online test	

Final Comments

We can only interview the participants from our selected sites at their convenience and we are still awaiting the finalisation of dates at some sites. However we should achieve our target of 15 case studies in the FE and HE sectors. None the less we are still struggling with Northern Ireland. We have indeed followed up all the leads given to us but to no avail! We would welcome some assistance and advice as to how to proceed with this one

Appendix 1 Steering Group Membership

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N.B This steering group is identical to the membership of the Road map study

Appendix 2

Interview Questions for Strategic Interviewee

The Open University and the University of Derby have been commissioned by JISC to investigate innovative practice in the field of e-assessment in the UK HE and FE sectors and to document the findings as fifteen case studies.

The key objectives are to:

- Explore the concepts of effective and innovative practice in e-assessment.
- Understand what e-assessment means to users and producers and how it impinges upon practice & development.
- Establish trends within the different case studies.
- Identify the key factors of the development process with their enablers and barriers.

Your help with the following questions is very much appreciated.

Name:

Date of interview:

Job title:

Address:

What kind of e-Assessment are you using?

What is your perspective on the uses of e-Assessment and their key advantages for your institution?

What institutional strategies and policies are in place, in relation to e-Assessment / e-Learning?

How have these developments been funded and can you give any estimates of costs?

Are issues of accessibility and usability considered?

Do you look for evidence that e-Assessment is used effectively? If so, what kind of evidence do you look for?

Do you have provision for professional development or training of teaching staff in relation to e-Assessment / e-Learning?

Interview Questions for Students

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- Understand what e-assessment means to users and producers and how it impinges upon practice & development.
- Establish trends within the different case studies.
- Identify the key factors of the development process with their enablers and barriers.

Your help with the following questions is very much appreciated.

Name:

Date of interview:

Job title:

Address:

What kind of e-Assessment are you using on your current course?

What is your previous experience of e-Assessment?

How is the e-Assessment embedded within your current course and with the tutors?

Were there any issues with accessing the e-assessment?

How do you feel about the e-Assessment?

How has the e-Assessment affected the teaching of your course?

How has the e-Assessment affected your learning?

Interview Questions for Developer / Support Staff

The Open University and the University of Derby have been commissioned by JISC to investigate innovative practice in the field of e-assessment in the UK HE and FE sectors and to document the findings as fifteen case studies.

The key objectives are to:

- Explore the concepts of effective and innovative practice in e-assessment.
- Understand what e-assessment means to users and producers and how it impinges upon practice & development.
- Establish trends within the different case studies.
- Identify the key factors of the development process with their enablers and barriers.

Your help with the following questions is very much appreciated.

Name:

Date of interview:

Job title:

Address:

What kind of e-Assessment are you developing?

What kind of software tools are you using?

What is your experience of supporting e-Assessment?

What kind of question styles / questions formats are you developing / supporting?

Is there any formalised process for the design / development?

Are there any issues with delivery? (Are issues of accessibility and usability considered?)

From your perspective, what has worked well and what hasn't?

Interview Questions for Practitioners

The Open University and the University of Derby have been commissioned by JISC to investigate innovative practice in the field of e-assessment in the UK HE and FE sectors and to document the findings as fifteen case studies.

The key objectives are to:

- Explore the concepts of effective and innovative practice in e-assessment.
- Understand what e-assessment means to users and producers and how it impinges upon practice & development.
- Establish trends within the different case studies.
- Identify the key factors of the development process with their enablers and barriers.

Your help with the following questions is very much appreciated.

Name:

Date of interview:

Job title:

Address:

What kind of e-Assessment are you using?

Why have you chosen to use e-Assessment?

How has the e-Assessment affected the teaching?

How has the e-Assessment affected the learning?

Are issues of accessibility and usability considered?

How is the e-Assessment embedded within the learning experience?

What support have you received from your institution for using e-assessment?

