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Assessing assessments: Initial reflections on a tool for analysing how effectively our assessments measure student understanding

Higher education Science Departments aim to produce graduates that are comfortable with assessing multiple sources of information and applying their understanding to solve complex problems. This is reflected by graduate employers who often deem problem solving to be an essential skill. This Faculty funded collaborative project between the Departments of Chemistry and Physics aims to analyse how we assess students' critical thinking skills, their ability to "unpack" information and make connections across the curriculum. Two frameworks (Legitimation Code Theory and three-dimensional learning) were combined to create a tool to analyse open book online exam questions for how effectively they question the level of understanding. This analysis was done at a module, year group and program level. In the Summer of 2020, with students as partners, a tool was created and applied to analyse the 2018/19 May exams of both departments. The results of this analysis were interpreted to produce guidance for staff on how to adapt the assessment to better assess student understanding. The results, the guidance, and the reflections of those designing and using the tool are presented here.

Key words

Assessment, Understanding, LCT, 3D-Learning, Students as partners

Region

UK/Ireland

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