

Breakout session on “the use of e-assessment”

Thursday 18th June 2020

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Our discussion started on the recent emergency online exams. Those commenting on what had happened with them all reported that the originally closed-book exams were then used in the open-book exams, though two sites had taken out the bookwork and replaced with (a) “explain” questions, which at one site needed to be typed in and were submitted to text-matching software and (b) problems that were not readily googlable. Some of these exams remained as the normal time, others had much longer times in which to do them.

One university is looking at ways to provide useful maths practice and formative feedback to students, in a more efficient way than in the past. They are looking at using Numbas, <https://www.numbas.org.uk/>. A separate institution reported successful use of this material that comes out of Newcastle University.

Also providing formative assessment, as well as encouraging some creativity and hopefully deeper learning, is the use of Peerwise. Two departments in the discussion room, amongst others, have used this software, which comes from Auckland. Students are encouraged to write interesting and useful questions for others to answer, including authoring feedback for various answers. Their peers try the questions, and can also provide feedback to the author on the question, which the author may then enhance.

<https://peerwise.cs.auckland.ac.nz/>

In lockdown some of the represented sites have used Teams or similar for students to give presentations and for oral examinations. As we may see much more of this in the future, this may be a useful thing to practice for and assess alongside the content. Another site reported using recorded videos of presentations, which some students may find less stressful.