

Online Chemistry Support Clinics

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Background

- Drop-out rates for distance learning and part-time degrees are very high compared to degrees delivered in a traditional manner.
- Evidence suggests drop-out rates “front-loaded” i.e. highest at start of a module.
- Chemistry clinics, or drop-in centres, have been established at numerous traditional universities.
- They provide an excellent opportunity for student-centred learning that is known to enhance engagement.
- Online clinics could reduce the “transactional distance” between students and tutors.

The Project

This eSTEEeM proposed project has two main components.

1. The development of a stand alone topic based online teaching resource containing:

- Vignette-style 5 minute screencast “how-to” guides
- Links to external resources such as the Khan Academy
- Structured questions with accompanying answers
- Tutor delivered “pencasts” on how they approached problems

2. The opportunity for students to book and take part in one-to-one online drop in classes that:

- Are focussed around specific student problems from the structured problems
- Provide an opportunity for students ask questions and gain instant feedback.

Which students?

This pilot scheme will target students who have just finished the level 1 science module S104 and who are deemed as “struggling” in chemistry and are progressing onto S215 (Chemistry: essential concepts).

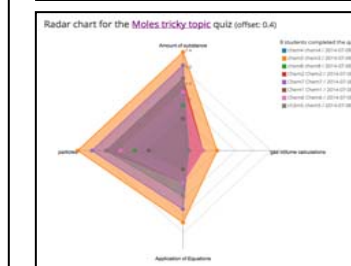
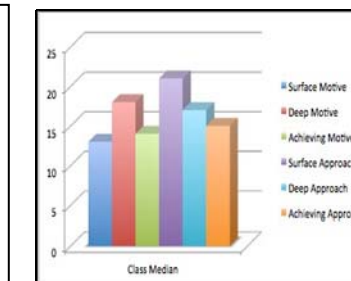
When will the clinics be?

The drop-in sessions will run for the 4 weeks prior to the start of the 16J presentation of S215 and will be available for 10 hours for each of these weeks. The VLE will be available 4 weeks prior to this i.e. August 2016.

How will success be measured?

The effect of the project will be measured in several ways, these include:

- Metrics from the VLE on the number of clicks on each topic area/resource
- Metrics on the relative student performance of students in S215 compared with analogous students from previous presentations
- Analysis of students difficulties and approaches to learning via use of “Tricky Topic Tools” and a Survey Monkey questionnaire.



Potential benefits and impact?

- Improved retention rates.
- Improved awareness of concepts students struggle with.
- Inform future OU retention policy.