Living in Lectopia: Does it Affect Student Performance?

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Abstract

Internet-based technologies are increasingly being adopted and used by universities. Amongst other benefits, they can facilitate the dissemination of information, offering an efficient and flexible means of delivering course content to students. One such technology is the “Lectopia” system, used at more than half of all Australian universities. Lectopia is a web-based lecture capture system, where a university lecture is recorded in an audio or multimedia format and made available on the Internet, for students to access at a time of their own choosing. Despite the increasing prevalence of the adoption of such technologies, little empirical research exists on if and how they impact on student performance. This study addresses that issue in the context of an accounting subject taught in the Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Melbourne. Bonner (1999) suggests that different learning outcomes may require different approaches to learning. We investigate the relationship between Lectopia usage and student performance over several different types of examination question – multiple choice, short answer and case-based extended response questions. These different examination components differ in the learning objectives being assessed and the skills for successful performance. We find that performance is significantly related to usage for short answer and extended questions, but no relationship exists for multiple choice question performance. The association is non-linear, as students who engage in moderate usage do not perform as strongly as students who engage in low/nil or high usage. The timing of usage was not significant. The results hold after controlling for motivational and learning preference effects.