

Clarifying student expectations of units with interactive videos

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This presentation examines the use of interactive videos to give university students a quick experiential preview of units in their program to clarify expectations and inform their choices of which units to take.

The links between student expectations and retention are well documented in higher education contexts, however techniques described in the literature for clarifying students' expectations primarily focus on whole courses and programs. In contrast, this study examines a technique to give students an indicative experience of individual units to help clarify their expectations prior to committing to enrolment in a unit within their program.

Eight interactive 'unit preview' videos were co-designed by academics, educational developers, learning designers and media experts, and piloted across several Business disciplines. Student surveys run to indicate student perceptions and content analysis conducted to examine the pedagogical design of the videos.

The data indicated that students responded positively, and 88% of respondents (n=60) who watched the videos agreed that the videos helped them understand what to expect in the unit. Content analysis of the interactive videos demonstrated that the pedagogical design of the videos was customised to each unit, with the interactive elements flexibly interwoven into the video to align with the epistemic frame adopted in that unit (i.e. the ways of knowing, deciding what is worth knowing and adding to the collective knowledge of the community (Shaffer, 2006)).

The findings illustrate that interactive videos can give students an indicative preview of a unit, including a basic insight into the foundational concepts and whether the unit prioritises mathematical calculations or analysis of cases or real-world scenarios. This provides additional information to students about their possible units, and an opportunity to self-assess their readiness in a safe environment and optionally engage with additional support resources. There are however limitations to what types of analysis can be included in the interactive videos and the relatively intensive design and production process needs to be considered.

Shaffer, D. W. (2006). Epistemic frames for epistemic games. *Computers & Education*, 46(3), 223–234.