

Using technology to enhance formative assessment

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A paper describing the issues raised in the development of formative assessment tools for the UK DfES "Skills for Life" programme. The tools are an essential part of ensuring that learners on Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL programmes are placed on programmes from which they gain maximum benefit.

Technology has enabled the development of easily administered tools. They use sophisticated algorithms to track users' progress and ensure that teachers get a comprehensive and reliable set of data on the performance of the learner. This helps them develop a tailor-made learning programme. Using technology has been cost effective, enabling the project team to develop tools for general use, the workplace and for specific employment sectors such as health and retailing.

The paper deals with the challenges of developing tools that are engaging whilst reliable and on making the technology accessible to a wide range of users. The writers have been associated with the development of e-assessment over a number of years.