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Piloting the SHARP Assessment Cycle: Co-Creating Inclusive and Transparent Assessments

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Abstract

This study pilots the SHARP (Strategic, Holistic, Adaptive, Reflective Process) assessment cycle in the Maths for Social Sciences module at King's Foundation. SHARP aligns with the TASK (Transforming Assessment for Students at King's) initiative, aiming to enhance learning through inclusivity, transparency, and student engagement. The iterative process at the core of SHARP ensures continuous assessment improvement through structured feedback loops, integrating real-time student and staff input. The cycle was trialed across three in-class tests. The adaptive phase demonstrated the value of iteration. Student feedback after Test 1 was used to redesign Test 2, and feedback from Test 2 informed improvements to Test 3. This led to simplifying language and context of questions without compromising academic rigor. Logistical modifications, like increasing spacing and dividing complex questions, enhanced paper readability. As a result, clarity ratings rose from 3.98 in Test 1 to 4.41 in Test 2, with difficulty levels remaining stable. Over 85% of students reported feeling involved in shaping later tests and 100% said they would like this real-time iterative approach to be used again. The holistic phase prompted staff to reflect on assessment load, raising concerns about redundancy and alignment with learning outcomes, sparking discussions about streamlining assessments. The reflective phase highlighted inclusivity in assessment environments. Student feedback revealed stress from in-class tests, prompting staff to consider future adaptations to support diverse needs while maintaining academic integrity. SHARP's iterative process highlights its potential as a model for other modules, promoting inclusive, student-centered assessment design.

Keywords: iterative design; engagement; inclusivity; student voice; tests