

A Study of Students' Experiences of Formative and Summative Assessment in Open Distance Learning: Insights from Meta-synthesis

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KEYWORDS Assessment of Learning. E-learning. Distance Education. Social Constructivism. Technology Enhanced Assessment

ABSTRACT This paper reports on the analysis of students' experiences of formative and summative assessment in order to articulate new insights relating to the most efficient and effective means of assessing students in distance education contexts. Relatively little research appears to have been carried out to ascertain students' experiences and beliefs regarding formative and summative assessments, and yet this is fundamental knowledge if one is serious about making changes in practice. This systematic document analysis purports to fill the gap in this area and confines itself to students at the University of South Africa (Unisa), a dedicated distance education university. The paper qualitatively surveyed the literature from 2005-2016. This paper was underpinned by the research question: *What are students' experiences of formative and summative assessments in open distance learning?* The analysis produced results that could be used to improve student learning and motivation.