



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT

The effects of controlled assessments in the new Diplomas on students' learning experiences

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Abstract

The Principal Learning components of the new 14-19 Diplomas are assessed predominantly via 'controlled assessments' involving internally-marked assignments which require learners to apply their skills to work-related situations. As part of a new qualification, it is important to explore whether the assessments have a positive effect on learning. This research used interviews with teachers and learners at six consortia (groups of schools/colleges working together to deliver the diplomas) to explore how the use of controlled assessments in the new Diploma qualifications appears to be affecting teaching and learning experiences.

At the consortia visited, the nature of the assessments was seen as encouraging learning and facilitating a less didactic learning environment. The assessments were generally considered less pressurised than traditional assessments and most learners found the assessment tasks enjoyable and motivating. The assessment types are reportedly encouraging the learning of broader skills (e.g. teamwork, communication, independent working) which are perceived as valuable. These are felt to be making students more confident, competent and what one teacher described as "whole people". However, there was some evidence that not all teachers had yet understood the requirements around the assessment 'controls' and questions remained about the assessment standards and evidence required.