

Toward Effective Courseware at Scale: Investigating Automatically Generated Questions as Formative Practice

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If you follow trends in online education, you already know that online courseware can, when used well, provide great learning gains for students. Full courseware provides students with content to learn from. We the q

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Automatic question generation (AQG): a method of creating formative practice questions at scale within courseware using artificial intelligence to minimize investments in human time and cost

Automatically generated (AG) questions: formative practice questions created by natural language processing and artificial intelligence using the course's textbook as source material

Human-authored (HA) questions: formative practice questions created manually by an individual and taken from the textbook's ancillary materials or written by subject matter experts

Recall question types: questions that require students to fill in a missing word rather than select from a fixed group of choices (in this study: AG or HA fill-in-the-blank questions)

Recognition question types: questions that require students to evaluate provided terms or concepts and select an answer (in this study: AG or HA matching; HA multiple choice, multiple choice multi-select, multiple choice grid, drag and drop, and pulldown)

DATA

WHAT DID WE FIND?

The data we have shows that

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1J[JQX TK JSLFLJRJSY INK*HZQY^ FSI UJWXNXYJSHJ \NYM &, VZJX
courseware used by the same students were found to be largely equivalent.

While there were differences among results for individual question types, there was no evidence that

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FSI YMFY INK*HZQY^ MFI FS NRUFHY TS UJWXNXYJSHJ FSI YWYWNH \M

impact on learning.

Q: Will students engage with generated questions in the same way they do with authored questions?

A: Yes, they will! In no way did students seem to engage in the questions differently based on their source.

Q: Are generated questions too easy or too hard as compared to authored questions?

A: No! Within our ability to measure difficulty based on student data, you could not make any generalizations about either source of questions being too easy or hard for students.