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Assessing Knowledge Through Written Reviews of First-Year Programming Students

In this paper a method of qualitative assessment of programming students is investigated. The qualitative assessment is done by reading students' review texts from three subsequent courses' individual programming project. The review texts are analyzed according to the SOLO Taxonomy and the students are awarded a SOLO level of Unistructural, Multistructural or Relational. The SOLO level is compared to the final grade of the three courses and a correlation between a student's final grade and the SOLO level is shown. Furthermore a positive progression in the students' comprehension and understanding of the course material is observed through the three subsequent courses. A recommendation is given to complement programming exercises with written assignments where the students get an opportunity to reflect and expand on the completed exercises.