Research and evaluation
Identifying the most effective exemplar-based teaching strategy to enhance Psychology first-year students’ academic writing skills

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Abstract
This Research and Evaluation presentation aligns with the Colloquium theme of approaches to assessment in which students and staff participate in discussions about criteria and standards. We already know that engaging students in marking examples of previous students’ work in a subject is associated with higher achievement by students in that subject. Effect sizes range from 0.42 to 0.69 (Payne & Brown, 2011; Rust, Price & O’Donovan, 2003). However we know little about the different effects of student marking versus discussion of criteria and standards on students’ achievement. For example, Wimshurst and Manning (2013) found an effect size of 0.52 on distance education students’ achievement which did not involve classroom or online discussion. In this presentation, we report the results of a project in first year psychology (PSYC1001 and PSYC1002) in which groups of students were presented with different kinds of examples of previous students’ work, and asked to complete different exercises (i.e., by reading through them, or attempting to mark them, and/or participating in group discussion about the quality of assignment writing with their tutor in tutorials). The effectiveness of the different kinds of exercise was evaluated using a questionnaire, and comparing students’ assignment grades with the exercise they undertook.

References

Theme
Approaches to assessment in which students and staff participate in discussions about criteria and standards (theme 3)