Research and evaluation

The benefits for learning of incorporating teacher discussion of exemplars into classroom teaching

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Abstract

The University's Assessment Policy states that students' work or performance be assessed solely against specified criteria and standards. Written descriptions of criteria and standards are often organised in a document called a 'rubric' or marking guide. However as recent research has shown many students find written descriptions of standards difficult to interpret and apply, unless students are helped to engage with examples of the standards (Hendry and Anderson, 2013). This presentation will ask participants to share their experiences of, and/or perceptions about, the use of exemplars in helping students prepare for an essay writing task. Presenters will draw on research into the use of exemplars. For instance, discussion will address how student essays reflect approaches to learning (Prosser and Webb, 2006), and how student-centred exemplar activities change student conceptions of writing and learning (McCune, 2004). Presenters will also draw on the preliminary findings of their own research project into how students interpret their experience of participating in marking and student and teacher-led discussion of assignment exemplars in class. In 2012 and 2013, we collected data to uncover whether an academic writing unit incorporating exemplar discussions shifted students' perceptions of academic writing, and whether such a shift corresponded to students adopting a deeper approach to their study. This colloquium session will connect participants with ongoing research in the area of exemplar uses by engaging participants in an exemplar discussion activity. Participants will be asked to discuss the most effective teaching practices for the use of exemplars in their context, to help their students meet expected standards while encouraging deep approaches to academic writing and learning.

References


Theme

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