Transcript Inclusive curriculum exemplar: Formative peer assessment activity

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Narration: This video describes a formative peer assessment activity I ran with teachers in a first-year education unit, as part of an inclusive curriculum project in 2015.

Our aims were to help students understand assessment processes at university as well as to give students an opportunity to get some constructive feedback on their assignments before they submitted them.

What the students thought: Ruby Ennor and Bek Wik

How did you feel before the peer assessment?

Ruby and Bek*:* I was stressing out.

Yeah, I was really nervous.

I didn’t like it, but then I thought if I have a rough draft I can just go, and then our names weren’t on it so no-one knew that it was yours, or anything like that. And then like getting into it and going through it, it was like, oh this isn’t so bad, I’m getting heaps of ideas, and like sub-headings and stuff, so it was really helpful that way.

Yeah, at the start I was really stressing out because I was like I don’t want someone to look at my work, like there are so many smart kids in this class, and it’s going to be like OK, I don’t know what I’m doing. But yeah, by the end of it, I found it was really good, the process.’

Narration: First we discussed with the students the peer assessment process, and what we hoped they’d get out of it. Then we gave out to students the marking rubric that was going to be used to assess the assignment, and explained how this worked. We demonstrated how to mark with the rubric using an annotated sample paper. We also discussed how to give good feedback. Then we started the process. We collected the students’ papers, gave them a number each so they were anonymous, then redistributed the papers amongst the students. Then we got the students to use SparkPlus software to enter their peers’ grades and comments, using iPads. I’ll show you how that looked a little later. And I’ll share with you what some of the students thought about the activity.

[presentation slide appearing on screen]

1. Scaffolding

* Explain peer assessment, intended learning outcomes
* Explain the rubric
* Practise with annotated sample paper
* Discuss how to give good feedback

1. The Process

* Anonymous, numbered papers
* SparkPlus software using iPads to mark

1. What the students thought

Here’s the rubric that was used to mark the assignment. We explained how the matrix worked, and how you’d normally evaluate one criterion at a time in a paper, working from the excellent range down until you found the level that described the paper best.

[Sample Rubric: ETP102 Rubric AT1: Analysis of an educational space report, appears on screen]

Narration: Here’s the annotated sample paper we used to demonstrate how to mark using the rubric. The comments are colour coded according to the criterion in the rubric that would be most relevant to evaluate when the students were reading that section of the paper.

[Sample annotated paper with annotated highlighted text boxes appears on screen]

Was it easy?

Ruby and Bek: I think it was, I think it was pretty easy. Like, once the teacher went through it and explained how to use it properly, and how to drop marks or give marks, I think it was pretty easy to go through. Because it was pretty clearly written. So yeah, I found it easy.

Narration: We also discussed with students how to give feedback that was constructive, specific, balanced, thorough and respectful.

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Giving good feedback

Helpful reviews are:

* Constructive—provide explanation and example improvements
* Specific—provide examples
* Balanced—highlight strengths and weaknesses
* Thorough—detailed and focused on material
* Respectful—how would you feel if you received the review

Unhelpful reviews are:

* Unspecific—criticisms are not justified or no examples are provided
* Unbalanced—either too much praise or too much criticism
* Disrespectful—criticism is directed at the writer, rather than content
* Aggressive—makes reader feel ‘attacked’

What were you unsure about?

Ruby and Bek: I think feedback, I think I found like, oh, if I write this, is it going to be a bit harsh, but I don’t know, I think it was just feedback was the hardest part about assessing. It wasn’t actually the rubric in general because you could see where they could get the marks and where they lost marks. But yeah, feedback and trying to tell them what they could do better.

Narration: We got the students to rate each other’s papers using SparkPlus, on iPads, working through each of the criteria in the rubric. They used the slider to allocate a grade and could enter comments as well. At the end we published the grades and students could see how anonymous markers had graded them and what their comments were.

[image of SparkPlus rating page appearing on screen. The page content provides unit code and name, instructor’s name, a rating key, criteria to be rated, rating slider, comments box for feedback.]

Would you recommend peer assessment?

*Ruby and Bek*: I would recommend it, because it just gives you a totally different outlook on how other people do their assignments, and how you can fix yours, and just overall, making a better assignment than what you had before you went into the peer assessment.

Like when I look back at other assessments now, I’m like oh yeah, I understand why I didn’t get the marks or why I did get those marks. So you can definitely see why they mark you that way. So yeah, you have a better understanding of it.

[End Credits appearing on screen]

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