Peer Review Technology for collaborative modules

This paper looks at the peer review technology that facilitates self, peer and standard assessment of student learning in collaborative modules currently and how this will continue post-Covid. In the collaboration modules, students actively participate in class, usually in a face-to-face setting, but recently online. There has always been an online element to these modules and it has been strengthened this year out of necessity. Based on our learnings to date, we plan to keep the peer review technology post pandemic.

Feedback is very important in assessment (Hattie, J., & Timperley, 2007) including formative or low-stakes assessment, but in large classes, it can be difficult to provide this in a timely manner. One solution is to carry out peer review. Peer review adopts a Students as Partners in Assessment' (Sapia) perspective (Ní Bheoláin et al, 2020). They report that students participate in formative and summative assessments with medium level of partnership. With a peer review approach, they are involved in self- and peer-assessment using grading criteria and making the changes to their final submission for lecturer assessment. It helps the students to understand the marking criteria and assignment expectations, particularly if an exemplar is provided. It also develops their assessment literacy. Some of the key features of peer review include increased mega-cognition (with the use of metacognitive strategies), timely feedback, increased self-awareness, involvement (and increased ownership) and auto consistency (across assignments). One potential drawback of the peer review process is that the level of feedback provided can vary.

Research shows that students learn a lot by reviewing and providing peer feedback (Dochy, et al., 1999) but students are often wary of peer review and it helps if it can be done anonymously. It can be difficult and time-consuming to implement anonymous peer review activity manually. In the peer review workshop on Moodle, one participant reviews another student's submission anonymously and provides some feedback. The use of this tool addressed the anonymity and implementation issues. Students get feedback quickly and in a common format using this tool. They can also learn from the other student's work, which should be on a different but related topic, and revise their own approach.

We implement a peer review process using the workshop activity on Moodle . There are several phases: setup, submission, assessment, grading evaluation and closing. The setup phase allows academics to define the criteria for the assignment. The submission phase allows students to upload their documents as a separate file or enter text online. Then students can do both self- and peer-assessments. Finally, academics can evaluate their activity and close the activity and mark in the usual manner. This process was used successfully with a class of 90 students and the feedback from the students themselves was positive. While the workshop activity facilitates the peer review process, it is important to dedicate class time to explain the process, review the rubric with the students, show and get them to review exemplars and give them guidance on how to provide useful feedback.

This paper outlines how we used the workshop tool and our plans for the continued use of the peer review workshop in the future.

References:

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