Learning and Teaching Conference 2012

Abstract 6D

Co-assessment: a democratic approach to deep learning

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A voluntary work placement in a Public Policy Honours service-learning course offers students an ideal opportunity to develop their employability skills and graduate attributes. This research is a follow up study to an earlier research project that identified employability skills and how they might be assessed within this service-learning course. The overall aims of the follow up study were firstly, to examine the effects of critical reflection in the non-traditional forms of assessment used in the course, on the students' perceptions and awareness of their learning. Secondly, the study aimed to examine the effectiveness of employability skills assessment through students' oral presentations. The course was taught in semester 2, 2010-11, during which time the small scale qualitative practitioner research study was undertaken. Eight semi-structured individual interviews and a focus group with the same eight students at the end of the course were conducted.

This presentation focuses on a pertinent and salient aspect arising from the research: summative co-assessment as a democratic approach to deep learning. As a consequence of the previous research study, students now self-assess their oral presentations on the development of their employability skills and graduate attributes by writing reflective feedback comments and suggesting an appropriate grade. Similarly, the teacher also assesses the presentations. Subsequently, on a one-to-one basis each student discusses, negotiates and agrees an appropriate grade for his or her presentation with the teacher. This agreed mark later contributes to the students' final degree classification.

In this presentation, the implications, effects and outcomes of summative co-assessment are critically analysed. It is asserted that co-assessment, while fostering greater student engagement and developing their graduate attributes, also empowers students. Co-assessment thus ultimately contributes to a democratic approach to deep learning.

Outcomes
Identify the implications, effects and outcomes of a case study of summative co-assessment Evaluate co-assessment as a means to fostering student engagement, developing graduate attributes, and empowering students Analyse the assertion that co-assessment contributes to a democratic approach to deep learning