



Peer Assessment Taster

17th April 2015

Birkbeck, Clore Management Centre

Purpose

The purpose of the event was to bring together teaching and support staff who were experienced - or were considering - encouraging and supporting students to assess each other's work online (either of 1:1 or as group work). The aim was to see some examples of technological solutions for peer and group assessment and to discuss the benefits and challenges of its implementation.

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions (Sarah Sherman, BLE)
2. WebPA Demonstration (Rich Goodman, Loughborough University)
3. Turnitin PeerMark (Mira Vogel, UCL)
4. Moodle Workshop Tool (tbc)
5. Group discussion: experiences of peer assessment
6. Next steps

Recording

<http://media.bloomsburymediacloud.org/media/clore-203-meeting-default>

Notes

WebPA (Rich Goodman, Loughborough University)

- WebPA is an online tool that enables students to assess and moderate each others group work and is used by a growing number of HE institutions both here in the UK and abroad.
- It was originally developed by Loughborough University in 2000 as a result of dissatisfaction that students working in groups received the same grade regardless of varying degrees of effort.
- The technology performs an algorithm to weight and distribute marks.
- Benefits for staff - it's easy to set up
- Benefits for students - it is a fair system that also elicits self-reflection and evaluation feeding forward into following assignments
- The tool integrates with Moodle via LTI and currently passes users from Moodle but not yet groups (this is available, although not yet tested, from Moodle 2.8 onwards, as it has support for LTI 2).
- Live demonstration site: webpaos.lboro.ac.uk
- Rich's presentation is [here](#).

PeerMark (Mira Vogel, UCL)

- Part of Turnitin, this tool enables students to provide feedback only (i.e. not grades) to individual pieces of work submitted by their peers.
- It is best *not* to use PeerMark as a voluntary activity - it can't be assumed that students will be highly motivated to use it.
- A lot of work should be done to promote the activity and, moreover to alleviate fears and worries. Involving the students in the development of the marking criteria is also a good tip. Also, full explanations to the students as to why peer assessment is being used is vital. It is helpful to establish a learner community before it is administered.
- There are greater pedagogical benefits for students in giving the feedback than receiving it, provided it is scheduled in a timely manner that will positively impact the next assessment.
- There is a suggestion that the distribution of assignments to students should be allocated by ability rather than randomly.
- Mira's presentation is [here](#).

Workshop Tool (Sarah Sherman, BLE)

- The Workshop tool is another peer assessment activity based in Moodle
- Sarah introduced the RVC's [Case Study](#) of the Workshop tool and showed this [video](#) of the academic explaining how she successfully used it. The activity was introduced prior to first year UGs submitting their first ever essay as a non-compulsory, formative exercise. Students reviewed essay topics which were different to the ones they wrote themselves, reducing any collusion and broadening overall understanding across the topic.
- The most recent iteration of this activity however was disappointing; previously, about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the previous cohort participated in the exercise compared to two or three students who completed it this year. Due to difficulties with pass rates, the assessment was restructured as a formative piece, which did not count to the students' final grade. Students perceived the assessment as a tick-boxing exercise and chose not to bother with the peer review option.
- The entire assignment is now being re-addressed by the RVC as a new strand in the course is being written which would provide a more strategic place for research projects and written assignments. At the time of this meeting, it was unclear whether the peer assessment part would be made compulsory.