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Changing Times: Refreshing the Learning & Teaching Strategy

Theme: A connected university   10:50 - 11:20

Enabling student peer review through the use of eBridge: an innovation in learning and teaching in two research modules

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"We think the Learning & Teaching Strategy should enable students to utilise eBridge to develop peer review skills."

Abstract:

This paper will address the issue of using technology to enhance student learning by describing the use eBridge to facilitate student peer review as a learning and teaching method in two level 7 research modules.

We first used eBridge to enable student peer review in Advanced Health and Social Research. For several years, this module had been taught in a traditional lecture format but student evaluations were becoming more critical of this approach because we were unable to tailor the content to the individual needs of a diverse student group consisting mainly of senior health professionals. We therefore redesigned the module, enabling sub-groups of students with shared interests to work together in tutorial groups, mediated by ebridge. Students worked on individual projects but at critical points were required to seek structured feedback from their peers using eBridge. Student evaluations of the module were positive, and commentary from the external examiner suggested that the quality of the students' work had significantly improved.

We further developed the use of eBridge facilitated peer review in Literature Review Methods. This time, students had the option of gaining feedback from their peers following a face-to-face seminar, or by posting on ebridge and seeking structured feedback. All students chose the latter approach. Students were required to post on ebridge, but were able to choose how much information to display. They were also required to provide a structure for the feedback they requested from peers. 30% of the marks for the assignment were available for a reflective section in which students demonstrated how they had incorporated feedback into their work.

In both of these research modules, the rationale given to the students for the use of peer review is that it simulates the review process in academic publishing, with each student gaining experience as both reviewer and reviewed.

The paper will give further details about how the peer review process was constructed in each module utilizing eBridge, and offer a tentative evaluation of the technique based on student experience, feedback from the external examiner and our own observations and reflections.

We are currently exploring ways of using this approach in a wider range of modules for example Mentorship in Professional Practice and at different academic levels, and will conclude the paper by reflecting on its potential for wider application both across the Faculty and the University.