CASE STUDY

Impact of Student Voice, Co-Creation, Feedback & Peer-Assessment on Student Engagement & Learning

DEIRDRE RYAN

MTU Department of Architecture

deirdre.ryan@mtu.ie

PROJECT AIMS

To trial a number of methods of improving student engagement and learning: (1) co-creation of a grading rubric, (2) peer assessment, (3) offering students choice in how they presented their learning, (4) provision of timely feedback.

INTERVENTION & IMPLEMENTATION

Eight architectural technology students participated in the intervention. The key stages included:

- Module learning outcomes and assessment requirements were reviewed, with students given examples of suitable topics. Students had choice in how they represented their learning in their final submission and researched exemplars of the different format types.
- The lecturer and student together formulated rubric criteria with descriptions and a weighting for each of the components to be assessed.
- Students were given the opportunity to do a dry-run of their presentations in order that they could get feedback from peers and lecturer.

EVALUATION & IMPACT

The intervention was evaluated qualitatively, initially based on in-class observations during the 12-week delivery period and subsequently via a focus group after module completion.

AT A GLANCE

"THE INCLUSION OF CO-CREATION LED TO GREATER ENGAGEMENT. THE STUDENTS CONNECTED MORE WITH THE CONTENT AND THUS PERFORMED AT A HIGHER LEVEL THAN IF IT HAD NOT BEEN OFFERED."

DEIRDRE RYAN

European Commission

PBL4COLLABTT
PBL for Digital Collaborative Training
PROJECT ID: 2022-1-PT01-KA220-HED-000087857

Strategic Alignment Fund

MTU
Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan
Munster Technological University

CASE STUDY

Impact of Student Voice, Co-Creation, Feedback & Peer-Assessment on Student Engagement & Learning

DEIRDRE RYAN
MTU DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

1. PROJECT AIMS

The aim of this project was to trial a number of methods of improving student engagement and learning:

1. Co-creation of a grading rubric
2. Peer assessment
3. Offering students choice in how they presented their learning
4. Provision of timely feedback.

These methods were selected to consider UDL, promote student engagement with feedback and facilitate active learning.

2. INTERVENTION & IMPLEMENTATION

Eight architectural technology students participated in the intervention.

The key stages are outlined below:

1. Module learning outcomes and assessment requirements were reviewed, with students given examples of suitable topics but advised they could select any relevant, justifiable topic other than listed options, with lecturer guidance. Students also informed that once they met the learning outcomes, they had choice in how they represented their learning in that final submission, with possible options highlighted (information paper, website, poster, research paper, Powerpoint presentation, model). Students then researched exemplars of the different format types.
2. Students were aware from Week 2 that they were going to present their research to their peers at the end of the semester and that peer assessment was to form part of the grading process. Concepts of assessment as/of/for learning, holistic and analytical rubrics, and what grades represent was introduced to students. Mid-semester, the lecturer and student together formulated rubric criteria with descriptions and a weighting for each of the components to be assessed.
3. Students were given the opportunity to do a dry-run of their presentations in order that they could get feedback from peers and lecturer.

3. EVALUATION & IMPACT

The intervention was evaluated qualitatively, initially based on in-class observations during the 12-week delivery period and subsequently via a focus group after module completion.

In-class observations indicate that students met the idea of having choice on topic selection and how learning was to be represented with some hesitation as first, but ultimately it was welcomed. Students were more actively engaged and vocal than in the past and appreciated being involved in co-creating the grading rubric; they engaged enthusiastically in the process initially but as the exercise continued interest waned and I had to complete it. Peer-assessment resulted in combined grades of students being 11% higher than the lecturers mark, resulting in the overall module mark being c. 6% higher than if peer assessment had not taken place. I believe this is within an acceptable range and am satisfied with the student/staff weighting.

A one-hour focus group after the module was completed was undertaken by an independent party to evaluate students' opinions on the effectiveness of the interventions and explore the overall student experience. Surprisingly, students referred to the rubric co-creation as group work, and although this was not group work in the traditional sense, perhaps working together on the rubric helped us all connect. However, on the flip side it possibly also made it more difficult for them to be objective when it came to peer-to-peer assessment.

Students acknowledged that this module offered something different and they referred to the freedom it gave them. Students welcomed the opportunity to be involved in co-creation, that the process of grading their peers helped them learn from each other and reduced their anxiety in relation to their own impending presentations.
They did acknowledge that they would have designed the grading rubric differently, they did not find it very intuitive when assessing their peers and that they should have more carefully considered the format of their final submission.

4. SUMMARY & RELFECTIONS

In my opinion, the process and the product are two separate entities. The final product may not have differed significantly from the previous year but the process, because it was more inclusive, seems to have had a beneficial impact on the students. Co-creation led to greater engagement and as a result it may be fitting to assume that the students stayed more involved with the module because of it and thus, they themselves performed better than if it had not been offered.

In subsequent iterations of this module I would ensure that the students understand the grading rubric they are engaging with. I need to reflect on the format of the final presentation as the students did not seem to be able to distinguish between the research undertaken and the dissemination of that research.
In terms of my own teaching practice, I am confident that there is a place for co-creation going forward and I would like to enable that within other modules in the Department.
Assessment beyond assessment of learning is crucial in third level education.

5. RESOURCES & REFERENCES

Deeley, S J, (2014) Summative co-assessment: A deep learning approach to enhancing employability skills and attributes, Active Learning in Higher Education 15(1):39-51.

Nicol, D. (2007) Principles of good assessment and feedback: Theory and practice. REAP International Online Conference on Assessment Design for Learner Responsibility, 29th - 31st May 2007.