Supporting transitions through undergraduate peer review within an International Politics module: an invitation to share in our reflections

Briefing note for Flipped Presentation @ #EUROTLC16 10 June 2016

Fiona Veitch and Michael Pugh, University of the West of Scotland
Contact: Fiona.Veitch@uws.ac.uk; Michael.Pugh@uws.ac.uk

Abstract
Since academic year 2011-12, the teaching team for International Politics – a second year undergraduate module taught to Social Science students at University of the West of Scotland – have been implementing and refining an innovative undergraduate peer review formative assessment (for draft essay introductions and bibliographies supported by a bespoke rubric within Turnitin Peermark). This initiative is based on research-driven pedagogy and sector-wide best practice deriving from insights into learner transitions, critical reflection and academic writing skills. The module’s teaching team are currently writing up an academic article integrating their professional reflections on this innovation with student voice data, including from learner focus groups. This flipped presentation represents an opportunity to share our ideas and techniques with professional peers, in order to receive feedback in pursuit of a more holistic perspective on the pros and cons of undergraduate peer review.

Educational Design: Why peer review?

• Research-driven pedagogy

Why this module?

• Building on good practice and student feedback (L10 Political Islam module)
• Aligns with LTAS (Learning, Teaching and Assessment) principles and UWS strategies

Assessment Regime

• Turnitin Peermark was adopted as the delivery mechanism.
Supporting transitions through undergraduate peer review within an International Politics module: an invitation to share in our reflections

Briefing note for Flipped Presentation @ #EUROTLC16 10 June 2016

Fiona Veitch and Michael Pugh, University of the West of Scotland

Contact: Fiona.Veitch@uws.ac.uk; Michael.Pugh@uws.ac.uk

• Students were randomly assigned two anonymised submissions followed by their own.

• Students were asked to give focused feedback on these (including a self-assessment) using a specialised rubric.

• Students were encouraged to reflect on and incorporate the feedback they deemed most useful from the comments received from this process.

• Engagement was incentivised by the automatic assignment of 10% marks towards their final submission on completion of this exercise.

• See Figure 1 for student instructions

Interim student Voice Feedback (2015)

Focus Group Feedback (N=10)

• Very positive student experience

• Made students think about essay structure/what staff looked for

• A couple of students very sceptical “they weren’t qualified to do this” – after peer review revised this, finding it “educational” and “very worthwhile”

• All expressed a desire for this type of assessment in future modules

• Quality of feedback deemed relatively unimportant – reflective element that proved most useful

• One important finding – commenting on structure, grammar and spelling – not equipped to do this, especially for those with enabling support needs – oversight by teaching team which has been addressed

• Students as ‘partners in assessment design’
Evaluating Results

- Initial indications highlighted an improvement in the exam performance (noticeably with the ‘tail’/distribution of grades at the C/D level)
- This could be due to cohort effect/peer review/other Moodle interventions/multi-factorial interplay
- Analysis of 2014-15 and 2015-16 results underway

Table 1: Comparing Essay and Exam Summative results, 2011-12 and 2012-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Campus</th>
<th>2011/2012</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursework 2 (Final Essay)</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>Paisley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/2012</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/2013</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting transitions through undergraduate peer review within an International Politics module: an invitation to share in our reflections

Briefing note for Flipped Presentation @ #EUROTLC16 10 June 2016

Fiona Veitch and Michael Pugh, University of the West of Scotland

Contact: Fiona.Veitch@uws.ac.uk; Michael.Pugh@uws.ac.uk

Table 2: Comparing Essay and Exam Summative results, 2011-12 and 2012-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hamilton (N=59)</td>
<td>Paisley (N=96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Essay Exam</td>
<td>Essay Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1 1 5 2 4 0 8 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>4 7 27 15 22 7 28 17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>32 20 48 43 13 21 15 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>14 11 14 20 2 11 4 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>8 20 2 16 6 8 0 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Engagement analytics

- Four students did not participate in the peer review
- The percentage figure for participation is 96%
Conclusion: Reflections and suggestions on our work in progress

For colleagues seeking to harness student peer review:

- Encourage and reward student participation in the peer review process, which will promote partnerships in learning
- The importance of ‘story-boarding’ the process for students, especially in terms of how it works on the VLE (see Fig. 1)
- If using VLE for peer assessment and feedback allow long ‘lead-in’ for systems testing and fixing any glitches that occur
- The need to set aside class time (and an increase in email traffic) to deal with student queries

Questions for our peers @ #EuroTLC16

- How to more fully engage weaker students in the peer review process?
- Should we make more explicit links between employability and peer review? (For instance, by highlighting that employees regularly receive performance reviews?)
Supporting transitions through undergraduate peer review within an International Politics module: an invitation to share in our reflections

Briefing note for Flipped Presentation @ #EUROTLC16 10 June 2016

Fiona Veitch and Michael Pugh, University of the West of Scotland

Contact: Fiona.Veitch@uws.ac.uk; Michael.Pugh@uws.ac.uk

References / Suggested Further Reading


Bostock, S (2001) 'Student Peer Assessment' The Higher Education Academy, HE Academy Resources Database


Supporting transitions through undergraduate peer review within an International Politics module: an invitation to share in our reflections

Briefing note for Flipped Presentation @ #EUROTLC16 10 June 2016

Fiona Veitch and Michael Pugh, University of the West of Scotland

Contact: Fiona.Veitch@uws.ac.uk; Michael.Pugh@uws.ac.uk
