The Blog

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Individual Reflective Piece Accompanying Group Report

Students work in groups of 4/5 producing a group report. They also have to submit a 500 word reflective piece that describes their experience of working on the project. Within their reflective piece they are asked to evaluate the contribution made by each member of the group and to rate each student on a 1 - 10 scale to reflect this contribution. The individual piece allows tutors to see who has contributed most to the project. Although the individual submission is worth 10% of total marks, it also allows tutors to vary the group mark (out of 90) up or down to reflect each student's contribution. The knowledge that all students are going to report on each other often motivates the majority of students to increase their level of participation. The increase in student participation/engagement has resulted in minimal changes to individual student marks.

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The blog is an innovative way for students to present their coursework for assessment. Online blogging sites offer students the opportunity to showcase their work (particularly appropriate for creative and performance-related coursework) and to provide peer feedback. Research on blogging suggests that students benefit in a number of ways: students pay greater attention to editing and proofreading; students can attract a public audience for their work; shy students can excel in virtual situations; students reflect and give feedback on their peers' work and have access to considered and constructive peer feedback; students find it easier to express themselves emotionally and students show improvements in digital literacy. Tutors benefit in transferring elements of feedback from tutor to student, in being able to review peer feedback and in terms of the usual benefits of online access (not time or location constrained).

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