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Title:

Rubrics versus marking guide for nursing students

Background: Marking guides with checklist style and rubrics have been used in different tertiary institutions to prepare the students in demonstration of the learning outcomes in their assessment tasks. Some evidence demonstrates that checklist styles give a specific mark for each assignment criteria without challenging the students whereas, rubrics have been found to provide clear standards about expected performance in learning tasks.^{1,2} There is limited information about the students and academic markers experiences in comparing both methods.

Objective: the aim of the pilot study was to investigate the participants experience in using rubrics compared to the usual method of check-list style in their assessment tasks.

Method: the study design was a quantitative and exploratory study in one of the tertiary institutions in Australia. Eligible participants were third year undergraduate nursing students (n=55) and employed academics (n=6) who marked the students' assignments. Data was collected through online survey. The outcome measure was the participants' experience in using rubrics and checklist style.

Findings: Majority of the students (78%) were using rubrics for the first time, whereas they had used checklist marking guides for at least two years. Many of students reported that both rubrics and checklist marking guide were useful but they found rubrics difficult to understand, wordy, and repetitive. The academic markers feedback was not in favour of any specific method, but they found rubrics to be time efficient, clear, easy to moderate with other markers and easy to read in comparison to checklist style marking guides.

Conclusion: Using rubrics was useful for the students to prepare themselves for the assessment task and it was time efficient and easy for the academic markers. However, the students need more education and support to understand and apply rubrics into their assessment preparation to achieve the full benefits of using rubrics.

References

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2. Howell, R. J. (2011). "Exploring the Impact of Grading Rubrics on Academic Performance: Findings from a Quasi-Experimental, Pre-Post Evaluation." Journal on Excellence in College Teaching 22(2): 31-49