Chapter 20

Effects of Anonymity and Accountability During Online Peer Assessment

Gunita Wadhwa
Memorial University, Canada

Henry Schulz
Memorial University, Canada

Bruce L. Mann
Memorial University, Canada

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the research question or problem in the introduction.
2. Summarize in your own words orally or in writing the gist of the literature review, including the theoretical framework to support the questions, problem, or need.
3. Describe the gist of the methodology, including:
   a. The participants [e.g., level, prerequisites, prior knowledge of the dependent variable under consideration, motivation to learn, intrinsic better job, etc.]
   b. The materials in depth [e.g., online, tools, software utilities, workbooks, writing materials, verbal instructions, etc.]
Abstract

A 2×2 experiment was conducted to determine the effects of anonymity (anonymous vs. named) and peer-accountability (more-accountable vs. less-accountable) on peer over-marking, and on the criticality and quality of peer comments during online peer assessment. Thirty-six graduate students in a Web-based education research methods course were required to critique two published research articles as a part of their course. Peer assessment was carried out on the first critique. Students were randomly assigned to one of the four groups. Peer assessors were randomly assigned three students’ critiques to assess. Peer assessors and the students being assessed were from the same group. Peer assessors assigned a numeric mark and commented on students’ critiques. The four main results were: First, significantly fewer peer assessors over-marked (i.e., assigned a higher mark relative to the instructor) in the anonymous group as compared to the named group (p < .04). Second, peer assessors in the anonymous group provided a significantly higher number of critical comments (i.e., weaknesses) as compared to the named group (p < .01). Third, peer assessors in the named group