Chapter II

A Case Study in Peer Evaluation for Second Language Teachers in Training

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Abstract

This chapter provides a case study of master’s level second-language teachers in training who used self and peer evaluation within a capstone course in their program. Two differing sections are reported; one was conducted entirely online, and the second was conducted face-to-face with a significant portion of online collaboration required. The author was a participant observer conducting this action research. Both courses required students to evaluate peers using various techniques including online quiz instruments, immediate chat-feedback quizzes, and peer evaluation rubrics. In addition, participants evaluated themselves both on the skills of teaching demonstrated and on their participation within the community. At least one fourth of each course grade was determined by peer evaluation. E-assessment strategies are detailed, and suggestions for future online peer assessment are given from this case to guide tertiary-level colleagues’
future peer evaluation efforts in the best sense of online collaborative discourse.

Introduction

This chapter is a case study report based on action research conducted by the instructor in two sections of a practical application/teaching course for graduate students studying to be teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). One course was conducted entirely online while the second was conducted in a face-to-face (f2f) classroom but with a significant portion of online requirements. For this case study, the key changes were in participant assessment and course grading. Through use of on-going discussion of procedures and summative post-course assessment in both sections, student and instructor analysis of the self and peer evaluation strategies will be presented. The chapter has three key goals for the reader. First, in the best sense of collaborative online discourse, it seeks to describe the positive as well as negative details of the case so that others may benefit from the experiences of the author/investigator. A second goal is to present sufficient information regarding all aspects of the participants, courses, and various assessment strategies so that others may replicate the peer evaluation strategies within their own communities with expectations of success because they understand the context of the case. Finally, the chapter verifies the usefulness, indeed importance, of including peer evaluation in any e-learning assessment context.

Overview

An overview of this chapter will allow readers to decide which sections are particularly pertinent to their interests, so I will begin with such an outline. In the first section, “Case Study Setting,” I will describe the pertinent specifics of the case in order to give as much information about the program, course, students, participant-observer, and so forth for readers to determine similarities and differences to their own contexts. In the second section, I describe the self evaluation strategies used in the case study. This is for those whose interest may be in self evaluation at the tertiary level. In the final section of the chapter, I will describe the peer evaluation techniques used both in online and f2f contexts.

This case study is grounded in the work of Vygotsky (1978) whose cognitive studies emphasized the importance of the social nature of learning and language