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INTRODUCTION

On the course Advanced pharmacotherapy we use written grading criteria, for student learning and exam assessment. Several studies have shown that grading criteria can enhance learning if they are used actively and in a formative way, e.g. by letting students make own assessments using the criteria (1, 2, 3). Rust et al. showed that students who undertake a pre-assessment workshop, marking and discussing an exemplar assignment, performed significantly better than those who didn't participate in the workshop (1). Inspired by this we decided to implement a similar approach.

AIM/S

The aim of this project was to find a way to enhance student understanding of the grading criteria, thus stimulate student learning and helping them to reach the intended learning outcomes of the course.

METHOD

In 2016, we implemented an optional 3 hour workshop, a few days before the written exam. The students work in small groups of 3-4 students, following this structure:

- Step 1: The groups discuss a written exam from a previous semester.
- Step 2: Short consensus discussion in class as a whole about what an answer should include.
- Step 3: The groups assess an anonymized student answer, using the grading criteria.
- Step 4: Consensus discussion about the grading.

We have registered students' attendance and compared that with the results for the written exam. For student feedback regarding the workshop, we have used the regular written and oral course evaluations at the end of the course.

RESULTS

69 % of workshop participants (108 of 156) have passed the written exam on the first attempt, compared with 46 % non-participants (48 of 105).

Table 1: Percentage of participants vs non-participants getting the grades Fail (F), Pass (P) and Pass with Distinction (PwD) for each semester.

Semester	Not participating in workshop			Participating in workshop		
	% F	% P	% PwD	% F	% P	% PwD
Autumn -16	42	53	5	28	61	11
Spring -17	67	33	0	44	56	0
Autumn -17	33	50	17	21	57	21
Spring -18	69	31	0	8	83	8
Autumn -18	56	44	0	23	77	0
Spring -19	42	58	0	50	50	0
Autumn -19	70	30	0	50	50	0

Differences observed may be influenced by selection bias, i.e. those more likely to attend the workshop might also be more likely to perform well on the exam.

We can also see a variation between different semesters, indicating that there might also be other factors influencing. The students work in problem based learning groups throughout the course and how well they collaborate in their groups might be such a factor.

Based on course evaluations, students appreciate the workshop. Average score is 5.2 on a 6-level scale with comments like "gives a good insight in assessment and grading" and "gave a deeper understanding of how answers can differ, why you get the different grades and how teachers reason when assessing."

CONCLUSION

Results indicate that this approach may be a good way to help the students understand the grading criteria and by that enabling them to reach the learning outcomes and pass the exam. However, impact of the potential selection bias and other influencing factors must be further explored. Evaluations show that the students generally appreciate this workshop.

REFERENCES

1. Rust, C., Price, M. & O'Donovan, B. 2003. Improving Students' Learning by Developing their Understanding of Assessment Criteria and Processes. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 28:2, 147-164,
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3. Jones, L., Allen, B., Dunn, P. & Brooker, L. 2017. Demystifying the rubric: a five-step pedagogy to improve student understanding and utilisation of marking criteria. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36(1), 129-142.