Case Study

Developing students as writers

Project summary

Student-Staff Partnership with the School of Law to revise assessment criteria and improve students’ understandings of criteria.

Background and rationale

As an extensive body of literature testifies, there is a real need for staff and students to develop better shared understandings of the expectations and conventions of writing at HE-level. In addition, the University of Leicester has expressed its commitment to extending opportunities for staff-student partnerships to develop learning, teaching and assessment practices. To these ends, staff and students in the School of Law and Student Learning Development have been working together to:

- co-devise new assessment criteria for written assignments
- co-design new feedback processes to facilitate understanding and reflection
- co-design guidance resources and activities to better enable students to translate assessment criteria into concrete writing practices

To date, the project has been very successful in stimulating staff-student dialogue and collaboration and has yielded several positive results.

Current stage of the project and planned next steps

The current stage is being very much student-led. Course representatives are consulting with students to develop a ‘Students’ Guide’ to the criteria, which they will produce in collaboration with Student Learning Development. The aim will be to facilitate discussions around how the somewhat abstracted language of assessment criteria translates into practice. This guide will be referred back to staff for comment before being made available to students. Finally, the criteria and the guide will form the basis of transition workshops.
with new first year students, in which these students will discuss criteria and expectations with reference to samples of writing - thereby enriching their understandings of the criteria by applying it themselves.