

Project title: An evaluation of the influence of the Online Report Writing Evaluation Tool (ORWET) on the development of scientific report writing skills.

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Report

In 2008, a summative assessment tool, Online Report Writing Evaluation Tool (*ORWET*) was introduced into the School of Biological Sciences, Human Biology course. This SciFER supported study was conducted to evaluate the impact of *ORWET* on student understanding of scientific report writing. The results of the study in 2008 allowed us to identify and introduce additional face-to-face learning support as well as modifications to *ORWET* for use in 2009. The presentation of *ORWET* (version two) in 2009 has led to improved student performance in the completion of the *ORWET* summative activity. The Likert scaled responses showed a positive shift in the attitude of 2009 students towards *ORWET* compared to 2008 students. The response from the 2009 students also indicated a higher level of confidence in developing scientific report writing skills after completing *ORWET*, compared to 2008 students. In both 2008 and 2009, student performance in the written scientific summative assessment remained consistent with previous years (2005-2007). This suggests that *ORWET* contributed to student understanding of scientific report writing as affectively as the 'draft feedback' activity, which was used prior to 2008. This study reinforces the need for careful consideration of how online learning tools are blended with more traditional, face-to-face approaches to learning. The level of cognitive understanding was not analysed, as it became apparent as the study progressed that a comparative analysis of students' perceptions and performance would need to be done over two years (2008 and 2009) rather than one.

Output:

Peer-reviewed articles

1. Lilje O Breen V Lewis A & Yalcin A (2008) *A pilot study on the impact of an online writing tool used by first year science students*. In: Proceedings of the Symposium Visualisation and Concept Development, October 2-3, UniServe Science, Sydney p 54-59.
2. Lilje O Breen V Lewis A & Yalcin A (2008) *The structure, use and impact of the staff version of ORWET*. In: Proceedings of the Symposium Visualisation and Concept Development, October 2-3, UniServe Science, Sydney p 188-192
3. Lilje O & Peat M (Submitted) *Getting it right: further investigations on the impact of an online writing tool used by first year biology students*. UniServe Science, Sydney

Conference presentations

2008 Uniserve Conference, 'A pilot study on the impact of an online writing tool used by first year science students' Lilje, O., Breen, V., Lewis, A. and Yalcin, A., University of Sydney, Australia

Poster presentation

2008 Uniserve Conference, *The structure, use and impact of the staff version of ORWET* Lilje, O., Breen, V., Lewis, A. and Yalcin, A., University of Sydney, Australia

2009 (Submitted) Uniserve Conference, *Getting it right: further investigations on the impact of an online writing tool used by first year biology students*. Lilje, O. and Peat, M., University of Sydney, Australia