# Northern Regional Hub-funded project

Project Report

## Why lecturers use exemplars and how they use them

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Educators' use of exemplars as a teaching-learning tool has been shown to play a key role in developing students' ability to make informed evaluative judgments about their own work and the work of peers (To & Carless, 2015; Hawe & Dixon, 2017; Hawe, Lightfoot & Dixon, 2017). When used in association with strategies associated with Assessment for Learning such as the sharing of assessment criteria and/or rubrics and peer review and feedback, exemplar use has been linked to cultivation of the knowledge and skills that facilitate self-monitoring and self-regulation (Carless & Chan, 2016; Hawe & Dixon, 2017; Hawe et. al., 2017; To & Carless, 2015). Development of students' evaluative knowledge and skills, and the ability to regulate one's learning, are critical capabilities of graduates and as such are valued goals of higher education (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Tai, Ajjawai, Boud, Dawson & Panadero, 2017). However, an emphasis in the research literature on garnering students' understandings and experiences of exemplars has been at the expense of discovering how and why lecturers use them in their teaching. The current project thus aimed to address this research gap.

**Study aim and design**

The overarching aim of the project was to explore lecturers' understandings about and use of exemplars. More specifically, it sought to canvas why lecturers in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland use exemplars and how they use them. Informed by a mixed methods approach, the project was comprised of three data collection phases:

1. Development and administration of two questionnaires: Impact of Using Exemplars in Teaching (IUET) completed by 44 respondents; Best Practice for Using Exemplars (BPUE) completed by the 38 respondents who use exemplars;
2. Individual semi-structured interviews of between 45-60 minutes with 14 lecturers;
3. Classroom observations of three purposively selected lecturers along with the collection of artefacts and follow-up interviews.

The project concluded with a reporting back session to phase two and three participants, and reflection on project findings with a view to future developments. Findings generated from three data sets (questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations) have provided a consistent picture of why and how lecturers use exemplars.

**Questionnaire results**

There was a high level of agreement across respondents regarding the following:

- the benefits of exemplar use for students;
- the manageability of identified drawbacks of exemplars;
- the ability of students to make evaluative judgments;
- and the role exemplars have to play in development of these judgments.

There was also a high level of agreement among respondents regarding factors to consider when selecting and using exemplars, and high agreement about the nature of task and student characteristics that support effective use.

Three comparisons to respondents' subscale scores suggested as lecturers become more experienced in using exemplars they attach greater value to their benefits and are less concerned with the potential drawbacks; those who use them in all rather than some of their courses attribute less importance to the potential drawbacks; and higher levels of exemplar use (across all courses taught) are linked to the attribution of higher levels of importance to specific criteria for selecting and using them.

**Interview findings**

Analysis of the interview data showed lecturers used exemplars for three purposes:

- to clarify the nature of the task / assignment;
- to help students understand the nature of quality work;
- to motivate and build students' self-efficacy.

Additional associated reasons underpinning exemplar use were apparent within each of these themes. Each theme also contained a set of practices that reflected how exemplars were used. While there were a number of similarities in how exemplars were used, there were some subtle, nuanced differences between lecturers,

predicated on the reason(s) for use. These three purposes contributed to a fourth overarching purpose: the promotion of student reflection on works-in-progress. This purpose was however implicit in the discourse rather than stated 'up front'. While lecturers seemed to expect students to apply knowledge gained from working with exemplars to the production of their own work, they did not make overt reference in their interviews to the use of exemplars to develop student self-monitoring and/or self-regulation.

**Classroom observations**

Classroom observations of three lecturers contextualized and further highlighted results and findings from the questionnaire and interviews. The direct observation of classroom practice is a distinctive feature of this project – few observational studies have been carried out in the area of exemplar use. Collectively the observations underscored the different ways in which exemplars were used for specific purposes. In short these observations illustrated respectively:

- use of extracts from exemplars, and four full exemplars, in association with 'A' range criteria during a short 'one-off' assignment related session to clarify the nature of the assignment and help students understand the nature of quality work;
- use of a single, full [short] exemplar at the beginning of class to familiarize students with the assessment task, make suggestions for improvement and revise understandings of course content;
- use of a full exemplar as an integral component over two class sessions to help students make and justify judgments about the quality of the exemplar with reference to specific criteria, and discuss suggestions for improvement.

Overall it was concluded while lecturers recognized the value of using exemplars for a range of purposes, their desire to accentuate the positive effects and ameliorate potential negative effects on students' commitment and motivation led them to use parts of, rather than the whole exemplar, and to adopt an analytical approach (Sadler, 2009a) when specifying and judging quality. Although lecturers may have

tacitly believed that the quality of a piece of work is more than the sum of its parts, exemplars were rarely used in ways that would convey such a message.

It was also concluded if students are to take responsibility for furthering and improving their learning they need opportunities to develop not only their evaluative knowledge and expertise (a major reason underpinning use of exemplars in the current study), but also their capacity to monitor and regulate the quality of *their own work during production* (Sadler, 1987; 2010). Fostering students' productive knowledge and expertise is critical as it addresses the overall intent of exemplar use – for students to monitor and regulate their work during production and to deploy strategies and tactics to narrow the gap between current and desired levels of proficiency (Carless, 2015).

**Formation of a 'lead' group of practitioners**

Finally, a key outcome of the study was the formation of a group of 'lead' practitioners in the faculty interested in critical reflection on and furthering of exemplar use. It is intended this group meet at least twice a year to share ideas and engage in critical reflection on exemplar use in their teaching / courses. The group will pick up on the findings from this study, in particular those related to the use of the whole versus parts of an exemplar, merits of a holistic versus analytic approach when evaluating pieces of work, and ways in which students' productive knowledge and expertise can be fostered in class through the use of exemplars.

**Guidelines for using exemplars in teaching-learning programmes**

Findings from the study were used to produce a one-page statement to support lecturers who wish to embark on or continue to develop their use of exemplars in teaching-learning programmes. This statement, *Guidelines for using exemplars in teaching-learning porgrammes*, is located in Appendix K.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The development of students as self-regulating learners is a valued outcome of tertiary education and as such students should have opportunities to develop the capacity to regulate their learning during their studies (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Tai et al., 2017). Use of self-regulatory strategies is not only linked to higher levels of achievement (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008) and retention (Zepke & Leach, 2010), it also prepares students for the demands of upper level courses and life beyond the classroom (Kitsantas, Winsler & Huie, 2008). In educational contexts self-regulation refers to students' ability to monitor, regulate and control their thinking, behaviour and motivation while engaged in academic tasks (Kitsantas et al., 2008). Self-regulating students take ownership over and assume responsibility for their learning. They are 'metacognitvely, motivationally, and behaviourally active participants in their own learning' (Zimmerman, 1990, p.4).

The study of exemplars as a means to support and further student self-regulation is an emerging field of scholarship in higher education. Researchers in the area argue that teachers' planned and purposeful use of exemplars can help students develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions that form the foundation of self-monitoring and self-regulation (see for example Carless, 2015; Hawe & Dixon, 2017; Hawe et. al., 2017; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Sadler, 1987, 2010). Exemplars are carefully selected samples of ***authentic student work from previous cohorts*** 'chosen so as to be typical of designated levels of quality or competence' (Sadler, 1987, p.200). While tertiary educators' use of 'worked examples' in the form of model answers has a lengthy history (Aitkinson, Derry, Renkel & Wortham, 2000), use of samples of work from previous cohorts of students in the form of essays, examination answers, posters, e-portfolios, videoed oral presentations or disciplinary artefacts such as art designs, laboratory reports and the like, is comparatively new (Carless, 2015).

Since 2002, a growing body of small-scale studies has explored tertiary students' perceptions about and experiences with exemplars (for example Handley & Williams, 2011; Hendry & Anderson, 2013; Orsmond et. al., 2002; Wimhurst & Manning,

2013). There is though a lack of studies regarding teachers' or educators' understandings of exemplars and their concomitant practices. The current project addresses this gap. The overarching aim of the project is to explore teachers' understandings and use of exemplars. More specifically, it seeks to canvas why teachers in a Faculty of Education and Social Work use exemplars and how they use them.

## 3. OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Studies in recent years, across a range of tertiary subjects and disciplines, have highlighted students' perceptions of the benefits accrued as a result of exemplar use. According to students involved in these studies, exemplars not only help them 'see' what teachers expect in the task at hand (Bell, Mladenovic & Price, 2013; Hendry & Anderson, 2013; Scoles, Huxham & McArthur, 2013), they enable them to gain a sense of the 'end point' and what the final product looks like with reference to aspects such as language and structure (Handley & Williams, 2011; Hendry, Armstrong & Bromberger, 2012; Hendry, White & Herbert, 2016; Scoles et al., 2013; Wimhurst & Manning, 2013). In addition, exemplars assist in developing understandings about the nature of specific kinds of academic writing such as reports, essays and case studies (Hendry & Anderson, 2013; To & Carless, 2015; Wimhurst & Manning, 2013) and raise awareness of the different ways in which set tasks can be presented (Orsmond et al., 2002). Students have also gained insights, through close engagement with exemplars, into the nature of standards and quality in relation to course work and consider them more useful and of greater value than rubrics and lists of criteria in supporting assignment related work and furthering learning (Bell et al., 2013; Hendry, Bromberger & Armstrong, 2011; Hendry et al., 2012; To & Carless, 2015). In some instances students have reported exposure to exemplars has boosted confidence levels and reduced anxiety (Hendry et al., 2012; Hendry, White & Herbert, 2016; Yucel, Bird, Young & Blanksby, 2014).

Despite a dearth of rich information about teachers' practice, a number of studies have shed light on this area through inclusion of background or contextual detail about the nature of students' experiences. A close reading of these studies shows that teachers provide students with access to exemplars through a range of means such as optional workshops (eg: Rust, Price & O'Donovan, 2003), on-line platforms

(eg: Handley & Williams, 2011; Scoles et. al., 2013; Wimhurst & Manning, 2013) and as part of regular timetabled teaching sessions (eg: Carless & Chan, 2016; To & Carless, 2015). It is only in recent times that research into exemplar use has included direct observation of actual classroom practice. Drawing on classroom observations, video-taped teacher-student interactions, interviews with students and the class teachers and the gathering of artefacts, To and Carless (2015) and Carless and Chan (2016) have provided a more detailed and in-depth picture of the ways in which teachers have integrated exemplars into class teaching sessions with their under-graduate students. These two studies have highlighted in particular the types of dialogic interactions among students and between teachers and students that support the use of exemplars as tools for teaching and learning.

**The use of exemplars as teaching and learning tools**

Hendry et al. (2012) have noted there is 'little or no overall benefit' (p.149) for students when exemplars are made available without any clear direction or support. Students benefit from planned rather than random exposure to exemplars where they are given opportunities to make judgments about quality (Sadler, 2010). The productive use of exemplars thus involves students in a purposeful, deep analysis and evaluation of the selected pieces of work (Sadler, 2010; To & Carless, 2015). A range of planned approaches to analysis and evaluation is evident in the research literature, including:

- in-class analysis of annotated exemplars with grade descriptors accompanied by opportunities to ask questions (Bell et al., 2013);
- marking of pieces of work during class sessions followed by group discussion and a teacher-led explanation about the rationale for awarding specific grades (Hendry et al., 2012);
- the eliciting of evaluation criteria from students, group appraisal and discussion of selected exemplars (To & Carless, 2015);
- student analysis and marking of exemplars prior to class, pair-sharing of analyses in class, followed by small group presentations regarding areas for improvement (Carless & Chan, 2016).

Integrating the analysis and evaluation of exemplars into class sessions provides students with 'evaluative experience not as an extra but as a strategic part of the teaching design' (Sadler, 2010, p.542).

Associated with these analytic activities is an emphasis on discussion and dialogue (Carless & Chan, 2016; Hendry et al., 2012; Sadler, 2010; To & Carless, 2015; Yucel et al., 2014). Embedded within workshops and class sessions, discussion and dialogue among students and between teachers and their students not only expose students to different views of quality, they provide opportunities to develop a common vocabulary appropriate to judgment and evaluation, to debate the nature of quality, and to negotiate and construct understandings (Bell et al., 2013; Hendry & Anderson, 2013; To & Carless, 2015; Carless & Chan, 2016). Students place great value on teacher explanations regarding the quality of exemplars and the dialogic interchanges that accompany these explanations (Hendry & Anderson, 2013; Hendry & Jukic, 2014). Participation in evaluative activities accompanied by dialogic interchanges with the teacher gives students access to notions of quality that reside inside the teacher's head (Sadler, 1987). These interchanges bring students 'into the guild of knowers, which is simply the group of people who share sufficient tacit knowledge for them to be able to recognize, judge and to a considerable extent, explain quality when they see it' (Sadler, 2009a, p. 822).

Carless (2015) has argued 'it is the engagement with exemplars, not their use per se, which is critical and for that reason the quality of the dialogue around them is crucial' (p.147). Teachers therefore need heightened skills in facilitating student discussion and leading teacher-student dialogue around exemplars with a view to exploring multiple view-points, enabling the co-construction of reasoned qualitative judgments about the merit(s) of specific exemplars, and the furthering of understandings about the nature of quality (Carless & Chan, 2016; Sadler, 2010). In short, the research literature shows that the productive use of exemplars includes a combination of the following: 'student generation, or analysis, of criteria; peer discussion of exemplars; teacher-led eliciting of student views with related commentary; discussion of how the exemplars could be improved' (Carless, 2015, pp. 147-8). It is through such activities that students have opportunities to develop

the necessary knowledge and skills that facilitate self-monitoring and self-regulation (Carless & Chan, 2016; Hawe et al., 2017; Tai et al., 2017; To & Carless, 2015).

## 4. METHOD

Informed by a mixed methods approach, the current project was comprised of three phases of data collection:

1. Development and administration of a questionnaire;
2. Individual interviews;
3. Classroom observations, collection of artefacts and follow-up interviews.

These were followed by a fourth phase that addressed the reporting of findings to phase two and three participants and reflection on these findings for the future. Permission to carry out the project was granted by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC), Reference number 017095. The Dean of the Faculty of Education and Social Work provided access to the site for the project – The Faculty of Education and Social Work at The University of Auckland. The participants were teachers of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, across subject areas, in a range of programmes.

**Phase one: Development and administration of the questionnaire**

Phase one involved development of a two-part Likert-scale questionnaire that sought respondents' reactions to a series of statements about why teachers use exemplars, their perceived benefits and drawbacks, and ways in which exemplars are used. These statements, drawn from the aforementioned literature, were reviewed and revised over a period of four months. Feedback was sought on various iterations from colleagues at The University of Sydney and The University of Hong Kong, and a penultimate version was trialed by a group of teaching colleagues in the faculty.

The final version of the anonymous questionnaire contained three sections (see Appendix A). The first section, to be completed by all respondents, requested demographic information. The second, again to be completed by all respondents,

contained 20 statements dealing with reasons for using exemplars, and the perceived benefits and drawbacks of using exemplars. At the end of section two those who did not use exemplars as part of their teaching were invited to provide a short written response outlining their reasons for this. Respondents who use exemplars were invited to complete section three which contained 18 statements about the ways in which exemplars are used, followed by seven open-ended prompts inviting short written responses about the ways in which the respondent uses exemplars. A call for respondents to volunteer for an interview to discuss implementation was included at the end of section three.

An invitation to access and complete the anonymous questionnaire was sent to all faculty teaching staff in September of 2016 via the staff mailing list: a link was included in this email to the Qualtrics site where the questionnaire was lodged. This invitation was re-issued on three further occasions prior to the closing date on the last day of the month. Forty-four teaching staff in total completed the questionnaire giving a response rate of approximately 38% percent.

**Phase two: Individual interviews**

Five lecturers contacted the Principal Investigator after they had completed the questionnaire to volunteer for an interview. Names of a further 21 lecturers who use exemplars as part of their teaching were accessed through a reading of course proforma (course outlines) available through the staff intranet and an email was sent to each person inviting them to participate in an interview. Fourteen of the 21 agreed to an interview, giving a total of 19 volunteers. Unfortunately five of the 19 were unable to be interviewed due to their unavailability during the interview period (November 2016 – February 2017).

Each of the remaining 14 participants completed an individual semi-structured interview of between 45 and 60 minutes with two of the researchers. The following areas were canvassed during the interviews: history of exemplar use and why exemplars are used; source of exemplars; how exemplars are used; challenges and issues associated with use; looking ahead (changes to usage) and; advice and

assistance to colleagues (see Appendix B). All interviews were transcribed for the purpose of analysis.

Each of the participants involved in phase two was informed that he/she might be invited to participate in phase three, classroom observations. Three of the 14 requested, for various reasons, not to be considered for this part of the project. One of the lecturers for example was teaching all new courses in 2017 so had not built up a bank of exemplars of relevance to these courses.

**Phase three: Classroom observations, collection of artefacts and follow-up interviews**

A set of purposive criteria drawn from the literature was used to carry out an initial analysis of all interview transcripts to identify lecturers whose ideas most closely reflected 'best practice'. In total, five lecturers were identified but as two of these had asked not to be included in this phase, only three lecturers were observed as they used exemplars with their respective classes.

Two of the research team members carried out a joint observation of Tessa (pseudonym) as she used exemplars in a 90-minute session with a class of students. The reason for using two observers was to ensure and check we were noticing and recording the same teacher moves. Each of these team members also carried out further observations on their own: one of the team members observed Nadia and Hope respectively during a single class session while the other member carried out an additional observation of Tessa as she worked with a class in a different course.

Each of the observations focused on what the respective teachers said and did. In accordance with UAHPEC requirements, no data were gathered from or about individual students nor were individuals approached for information. The observers took field notes during the sessions, many in the form of verbatim lecturer statements or questions, and gathered exemplars and other relevant artefacts used during the session eg: rubrics, assignment outlines. A follow-up interview of between 30 and 45 minutes was held with each of the lecturers to clarify aspects of practice and 'uncover' reasons for specific activities.

## 5. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Data from the questionnaires were entered into SPSS for analyses. An initial missing data analysis was performed to identify patterns of missing data and decide how best to address any non-random patterns e.g., inputing the missing data with replacement values. Once data were cleaned, measures of internal consistency of items employed within the two questionnaires were calculated, i.e., Cronbach alphas. Cronbach alpha determines the internal consistency or average correlation of items in a survey instrument to gauge its reliability (Miller, 1995). As a next step, descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviation, range) for individual items were generated as was an overall correlational analysis looking for relations between items. This was followed by Exploratory Factor Analyses on each questionnaire to identify appropriate subscales. Cronbach alphas were performed on each of the subscales to measure the internal consistency of items within each subscale. Finally, three Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were performed using the performance on the subscales as the outcome variables and teaching experience, experience using exemplars, and extent of use of exemplars in taught courses as the independent variables, respectively.

The open-ended responses in the questionnaire and interview data were analysed with codes assigned in a manner consistent with the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). While a number of open codes were applied in a deductive manner using criteria derived from Sadler's (1989) framework and cognate literature (eg: Carless, 2015) eg: *knowing what is expected; judgment making*; *improvement; quality work,* the majority were induced from the data eg: *big picture; source of comfort; possibilities; unpacking...* This enabled analysis to move from description to explanation (Ezzy, 2002). These open codes were then compared and grouped to create key categories (axial codes) that captured the properties of and relationships

between open codes, for example *goal* / *final output*; *task genre*. Deliberation on the axial codes generated the themes used in Section 7 of this report. Two of the authors carried out these analyses, initially coding the same data sets to establish reliability in terms of understandings and interpretations of the data, then later coding samples of randomly selected data and data identified as 'puzzling' as a check on the trustworthiness of interpretations. Taken together, these approaches generated an on-going and iterative dialogue between data and theory, resulting in a robust process of analysis.

## 6. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

This section outlines results from the Likert scale questionnaires (Likert, 1932).

**Participants**

Forty-four participants completed the Impact of Using Exemplars in Teaching (IUET) questionnaire with 38 of the 44 completing the Best Practice for Using Exemplars (BPUE) questionnaire. As indicated previously, if a participant did not use exemplars in their teaching they did not need to complete the BPUE questionnaire (N = 6). In terms of the 38 participants who identified that they used exemplars in their teaching, 27 taught at the undergraduate level and 35 at the postgraduate level with almost 65% teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. As can be seen in Table 1, the highest percentage of lecturers had been teaching at the faculty for 6-10 and 16-20 years, however, there was a representative sample of lecturers across a range of years teaching experience. The majority had been using exemplars as part of their teaching from 1-5 years (15/38) and 6-10 years (11/38) (See Table 1, Appendix B).

Almost half the participants reported they used exemplars in all courses they taught (16/38), while 22 of the 38 indicated they used exemplars in some but not all courses. In relation to use of exemplars within undergraduate and/or postgraduate courses, 24 of the 27 participants who taught at the undergraduate level used exemplars in their courses, while 29 of the 35 who taught at the postgraduate level used them at this level. The majority of the participants taught courses within the

Teacher Education programme (27/38), while the remainder taught courses within the Bachelor of Arts / Master of Arts in Education programmes and in Counselling, Social Work and Human Services programmes.

In terms of the 6 participants who indicated they do not use exemplars, all taught undergraduate courses, and all but one taught postgraduate courses. The range of teaching experience for this group ranged from 6 to 26+ years (6-10 years =1; 11-15 years = 3; 16-20 years = 1; 26+ years = 1). The majority of participants who did not use exemplars taught courses within the Bachelor of Arts / Master of Arts in Education programmes (N = 4) with one participant teaching courses within the Teacher Education, and Counselling, Social Work and Human Services programmes, respectively.

**Summary descriptive statistics and reliabilities for IEUT and BPUE**

Overall item means and standard deviation for IEUT were 2.69 and .810, respectively, with an alpha reliability of .82. This indicates that as a whole, the questionnaire was very reliable, and the average response sat between agree and neither agree/disagree (See Table 2, Appendix C). Overall item means and standard deviation for BPUE were 2.54 and .537, respectively, with an alpha reliability of .61. This indicates a moderately reliable questionnaire as a whole and the average response sat between agree and neither agree/disagree (See Table 3, Appendix D). Inter-item correlations for the IEUT ranged from .889 to -.560, while they ranged from .581 to -.699 for the BPUE. The magnitude suggests a level of redundancy in terms of what each item measured within each questionnaire and the negative correlations suggests that the questionnaire is measuring multiple underlying constructs. These results supported the use of an exploratory factor analysis approach to identify distinctive factors within each questionnaire.

**IEUT - Exploratory factor analysis, and descriptive statistics and reliabilities of subscales**

The Principal Axis extraction method with Promax with Kaiser Normalization rotation was used to analyse the responses of the IEUT questionnaire (20 items) (Thompson, 2004). The rotation converged in 12 iterations. Three factors were identified which

accounted for 69.30% of the total variance. Their respective eigenvalues were 48.25, 12.48, and 8.56. The factors could be meaningfully organised into three subscales which focused on Benefits of Using Exemplars, Drawbacks of Using Exemplars, and Student Judgments, respectively. Mean, standard deviations, alpha reliabilities of the scores of subscales of the IEUT can be found in Table 4 (See Appendix E). As can be seen in this table, all three scales had high to very high reliability scores. Mean scores on the three subscales indicated that teachers had a high level of agreement about the benefits of using exemplars (Benefits of Using Exemplar subscale), high level of disagreement about the potential drawbacks to the use of exemplars (Drawbacks to Using Exemplars subscale), and respondents felt students could make sound judgements about the quality of academic work (Student Judgment subscale).

More specifically, the first factor, Benefits of Using Exemplars contained the following 12 items:

- Using exemplars means students can see what quality work looks like (M[1]=1.66, SD = .83)
- Exemplars show students what is expected in a piece of work (M=1.86)
- Using exemplars gives students a better understanding of task requirements (M=1.91; SD = 94)
- Exemplars are a useful learning tool for students (M=1.91; SD = .94)
- Exemplars are a useful teaching tool (M=1.98; SD = .98)
- Using exemplars has a positive impact on student achievement (M=2.09; SD = .96)
- Using exemplars results in students developing understandings about achievement standards (M=2.09; SD = .94)
- The use of exemplars results in greater transparency around assessment (M=2.11; SD = 1.02)
- Exemplars raise student confidence to undertake similar tasks (M=2.14; SD =.93)
- Using exemplars improves the quality of students' work (M=2.18; SD = .99)
- Students need support to make judgments about the quality of their own work (M=2.20; SD = .91)
- Using exemplars helps students monitor their own work (M=2.32: SD = .96).

This factor addressed perceived benefits of exemplar use. These benefits inform and reflect reasons for their use by educators. There was strong agreement that exemplars were useful tools for student learning (M=1.91) and teaching (M=1.98). Overall participants were in strong agreement regarding the ability of exemplars to enable students to see and/or give students a better understanding of: task

[1] M = Mean SD = Standard deviation

requirements (M=1.91); of what is expected in a piece of work (M=1.86); and the nature of quality work (M=1.66).

The second factor was comprised of the following five items:

- Using exemplars results in students copying the exemplars (M =3.50; SD = 1.17)
- The use of exemplars lowers student creativity (M=3.64; SD = 1.12)
- Exemplars lower student confidence to undertake similar tasks (M=3.77; SD = .86)
- Using exemplars takes valuable time away from teaching course content (M=4.09; SD = .83)
- Using exemplars is an 'extra' that I do not have time for (M=4.18; SD = .95).

As each item identifies a perceived shortcoming or drawback in the use of exemplars, the factor is titled Drawbacks of Using Exemplars. Overall participants were in
agreement that exemplars are not an add-on or extra that take valuable time away from teaching.

The third and final factor was comprised of three items:

- Students are capable of making sound judgments about the quality of a piece of work (M=2.43; SD = . .95)
- Students are not capable of making sound judgments about the quality of their work (M=3.77: SD = .77)
- Students are not capable of making sound judgments about the quality of peers' work (M=4.02; SD = .79).

The common feature across these three items is their attention to the ability of students to make robust and sound judgments about the quality of a piece of work. Two of these items were reverse coded prior to all analyses. Reverse coding means that the numerical values for items that are negatively worded are changed so that a high value indicates the same type of response on every item (Herche & Engelland, 1996). In the case of the two items which include the word "not", reverse scoring means that the numerical scoring scale runs in the opposite direction. So, in the present case, strongly disagree would be changed to a score of 1, disagree would be 2, neither agree or disagree still equals 3, agree becomes 4 and strongly agree = 5. Thus respondents were in agreement that students can make robust appraisals about the quality of a piece of work, although slightly less so in the case of their own work.

**BPUE - Exploratory factor analysis, and descriptive statistics and reliabilities of subscales**

The Principal Axis extraction method with Promax with Kaiser Normalization rotation was used to analyse the responses of the BPUE questionnaire (18 items). The rotation converged in 12 iterations. Three factors were identified which accounted for 53.58% of the total variance. Their respective eigenvalues were 28.68, 15.21, and 9.68. The factors could be meaningfully organised into three subscales which focused on the Selection and Use of Exemplars, Task and Student Characteristics and Procedural Matters, respectively. One item did not fit clearly into any of these factors [as indicated by a low standardised coefficient (< .30)] and was eliminated from further analysis. Through the process of assessing reliabilities of the identified subscales, the Selection and Use of Exemplars subscale was retained, the Task and Student Characteristics subscale was reduced from 6 to 4 items in order to eliminate items which contributed to low reliability, and the Procedural Matters subscale was eliminated due to an overall low level of reliability.

Mean, standard deviations, alpha reliabilities of the scores of subscales of the BPUE can be found in Table 4 (see Appendix E). As can be seen in Table 4, both scales had moderate reliability scores. Means scores on the two subscales indicated that there was a high level of agreement about the conditions under which exemplars should be used to ensure positive impact (Selection of exemplars), and high agreement about the important student characteristics that will support positive impact of exemplars (Task and Student Characteristics subscale).

The first factor, Selection and Use of Exemplars, was comprised of 7 items:

- Discussion about what constitutes quality work is an essential feature of exemplar use (M=1.74; SD = .51)
- Students' understandings about quality work are enhanced when they discuss exemplars with others (M=1.82; SD = .56)
- Students need to be able to explain why an exemplar is good or not good (M=1.97; SD = .59)
- Time should be given in class for students to discuss the quality of exemplars (M=2.08; SD = .78)
- Using exemplars is another way of helping students understand course content (M=2.11; SD = .92)
- Exemplars should illustrate a range of achievement (M=2.50; SD = 1.01)

- Only high-quality exemplars should be used (M=3.39; SD = 1.13).

These items address qualities that teachers attend to when selecting and using exemplars. There was strong agreement regarding the importance of discussion in class about the nature of quality and the need for students to be able to explain why an exemplar is of good quality (or not). There was less agreement (and/or a neutral stance) regarding the need for exemplars to illustrate the spectrum of achievement and the exclusive use of high quality pieces of work.

The second factor, Task and Student Characteristics contained 4 items:

- Exemplars are especially useful when students are unfamiliar with the type of task e.g., report (M=1.76; SD = .54)
- The type of task in the exemplar should match the task students are to complete e.g., report exemplar (M=1.82; SD = .77)
- Exemplars are useful for all students, irrespective of level of study e.g., undergraduate, postgraduate (M=1.89; SD = .76)
- The exemplar topic should match the topic students are to address in their work (M=2.89; SD = 1.10).

These items address links between the task students are to complete, the level of the students and the exemplars. Overall respondents strongly agreed that exemplars are particularly useful when students are unfamiliar with the type of task required by an assignment and the exemplar matches the type of task called for.

**Teaching experience, experience using exemplars, and extent of exemplar use**

In order to better understand the impact of teaching experience and exemplar use on participants' views on the impact and appropriate use of exemplars, three comparisons of participants' subscale scores were performed: lecturers who had more versus less years teaching, lecturers who had more versus less experience in using exemplars, and lecturers who used exemplars in all versus some of their courses.

Participants were separated in more and less years teaching experience groups by combining lecturers who had 16 – 26+ years (N = 19) and 1 – 15 years (N = 19) experience, respectively. A one-way ANOVA was performed and there were no significant differences between these two groups on any of the subscales (See Table 5, Appendix F).

In addition, participants were separated into more and less experience in using exemplars groups by combining lecturers who had 6 – 26+ years (N = 15) and 1-5 years (N = 23) experience, respectively. A one-way ANOVA was performed and there was one significant difference between these two groups for the Benefits subscale ($F = 7.384$, $p < .01$) (See Table 6, Appendix G). Lecturers with more experience in using exemplars had higher scores on the Benefits subscale than those with less experience. These results suggest that as lecturers become more experienced in using exemplars they identify greater value to the potential positive impacts of exemplars.

Finally, participants were separated into two groups related to the extent to which they employ exemplars – in some versus all of their courses. A one-way ANOVA was performed and there were two significant differences between these two groups for the Selection and Use of Exemplars subscale ($F = 4.447$, $p < .04$) and Drawbacks subscale ($F = 5.684$, $p < .02$) (See Table 7, Appendix H). Lecturers who used exemplars in all their courses had higher scores on the Selection and Use of Exemplars subscale and lower scores on the Drawbacks subscale than those who used exemplars in some of their courses. These results suggest that higher levels of exemplar use are linked to attributing higher levels of importance to identified criteria for selecting and using exemplars. In addition, lecturers who used exemplars in some but not all of their courses appeared to attribute more importance to the potential identified drawbacks of using exemplars.

## 7. INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE FINDINGS.

This section presents themes that emerged from the interviews and responses to the open-ended questions from the questionnaire with reference to reasons why lecturers use exemplars and how exemplars are used.

**Context**

For many of the respondents, exemplar use was neither new nor unusual. A number indicated they had used exemplars of student work as part of their teaching practice prior to coming to the university and continued this practice in the tertiary setting:

> *I have always used exemplars in my teaching with school children as well as adults …* (Survey # 1)[2];
>
> *I was a high school teacher and we used exemplars to prepare students for assessments. I continued the practice when I moved to tertiary* (Survey # 32).

For others, the impetus for using exemplars was referenced to student demand:

> *Students request it often … and I have responded* (Survey # 8);
>
> *… requests from students* (Survey # 11);
>
> *Students asked to see exemplars so [I] began to use them* (Survey # 25);
>
> *… they [students] asked for [them]* (Donna, Int, p.7)[3];
>
> *… some of the students have asked for them in terms of the assignment …* (Margie, Int, p.1);
>
> *I agreed to provide exemplars because students over several years insisted that they needed to see some* (Survey # 16).

Margie, like many others, had been using exemplars '*as long as I have been teaching here … which is quite a long time … maybe six to seven years'* (Int. p.1) while Jenny stated she had '*probably been using [them] for the last ten years, as far as I can*

[2] Survey refers to the Likert scale survey/questionnaire; # to the number ie: #1 to respondent 1's response.

[3] Int refers to a lecturer's interview response; p.7 refers to the page number of the interview transcript.

*remember'* (Int, p.1) and Braden commented '*it's long enough that I don't remember it anymore, so over a decade'* (Int, p.1). Exemplars were comprised of '*assessment tasks … past assignments'* (Tina, Int, pp.1-2) from previous cohorts of students that had been deliberately gathered over time, with student permission:

> *On the coversheet of their assignment it says can they [assignments] be used as an exemplar … we actually have students' permission [to use them]* (Margie, Int, p.11).

Over time, the majority of lecturers had *'amassed a range of students' work'* (Tessa, Int, p. 2) to be used as exemplars for *'teaching purposes'* (Kathryn, Int, p.3) with either their undergraduate or postgraduate classes. Seemingly, lecturer selection of exemplars was a deliberate process. As Brittany (Int, p.3) explained, during the marking of student work or as part of the moderation process she and her team were constantly on the lookout for pieces of work *'that we'd really like as an exemplar'*. Similarly, Gemma (Int, p. 4) ensured that after marking she *'photocopied a range of assignments'* that could be used as exemplars at a later date. Once student permission was gained, particular pieces of work were added to the exemplar pool that typically had been built up over an extended period of time.

Notably, the use of student created exemplars was seen as preferable to those created by lecturers. Usually, it was only in instances where no suitable student created exemplars were available that lecturers created their own. Using genuine pieces of work, created by students from previous cohorts was seen as providing the degree of authenticity necessary to motivate students to take notice of and learn from an exemplar. Nita, like many others in the study, felt that:

> *Authentic examples of students' work really engage students in the learning process and I think it is the authenticity of the work – they [students] can see oh I can do that* (Int, p.8)

With one or two exceptions, as noted in Section 5 of this report, lecturers had been using exemplars with their students over a long period of time. Their use had become an accepted and useful part of the *'teaching process'* (Nita, Int, p.1) as lecturers had come to the realisation that exemplars were the only way in which *'you could really*

*communicate to students what the criteria really mean[t]'* (Kathryn, Int, p. 1). An analysis of lecturers' talk revealed there were, in the main, four different ways in which exemplars were used with students, although these practices were not necessarily carried out by all lecturers. Significantly how lecturers used exemplars was judicious – usage was tied to a specific purpose or reasons.

**Why lecturers use exemplars and how they use them**

Analysis of interview and survey responses showed that lecturers used exemplars for three reasons: to clarify the nature of the task / assignment; to help students understand the nature of quality work; to motivate and build students' self-efficacy. These three reasons contributed to a fourth overarching and largely implicit purpose: to promote student reflection on works-in-progress.

***To clarify the nature of the task / assignment***

Without exception, all of those interviewed and a majority of the Likert scale respondents indicated they used exemplars for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the task or assignment for their students. Although students have access from the outset of each course to a written outline of assignments or assessment tasks '*instructions for assignments are often written poorly – ambiguous, oral instructions in a lecture are too abstract … so I purposefully use exemplars'* (Survey # 29). Nadia expressed a similar sentiment during her interview, explaining that she used exemplars to show students *'what it [the final product] looks like … because … so many tasks are very poorly written'* (Int, p.1). Lecturers talked about how they supplemented written outlines of assignments and verbal explanations with exemplars so students could gain a better understanding about what the task or assignment entailed. These artefacts provided students with '*concrete examples of course tasks [assignments]'* (Survey # 21) *'that [are] a bit more memorable than words'* (Nita, Int, p.17). As voiced by Tina, *'showing is better than explaining'* (Int, p.1). Furthermore, *'exemplars are better at doing that [teaching people to see what matters] than … just defining and telling'* (Braden, Int, p.23). For Jenny, exemplars were *'something concrete to actually help [students] conceptualize [the task]'* (Int, p.5) while for Survey respondent 11 they were *'powerful illustrations of the guidelines … and [they] support [my] explanations of how to go about tasks'*.

Tessa's foremost reason for using exemplars was to ensure the students in her classes developed a shared understanding of task requirements and what the task entailed:

> *Number one reason, I suppose pragmatically, [it] is to really help everyone get on the same page in terms of what does this [task] look like; what is required; what does this mean in the assignment?* (Int, p.7).

Her colleagues also used exemplars for the purpose of developing students' knowledge and understanding of task requirements:

> *[exemplars enable me to] clarify task requirements* (Survey # 17);
>
> *[exemplars are] a teaching aide to show/explain a task* (Survey # 21);
>
> *[I use exemplars] … for the purpose of helping them [students] to understand … the assessment task …* (Jenny, Int, p.14);
>
> *[I use exemplars to] help students to actually unpack what the task is asking of them because sometimes the reason they don't do particularly well [is]they don't understand the task* (Hope, Int, p.1).

Helping students understand the nature of the task and what they need to do was considered central to successful achievement.

As part of their clarification of the task, lecturers used exemplars to show students where they were going ie: the end product of the task and how they might go about getting there. Nita for instance used exemplars to help students '*visualize the output, the final output … visualise where this is heading*' (Int, pp.1-2) while Henry used them so students could have '*a sort of a target … there's ... a clear goal … [get] a sense of the big picture and where they are going'* (Int, p.2). According to Tessa, having access to a physical representation of the finished product meant students *'know what [they] are aiming for'* (Int, p.17) while Nita concluded that without exemplars, assignment tasks *'would be more of a mystery, [using exemplars] sort of takes the mystery out of what is actually required, it's concrete'* (Int, p.2).

Exemplars were noted as particularly useful for students who were relatively 'new' to academic study. Henry explained how for many students '*it's the first time they have done something like this [an assignment such as a critical reflection] so they*

*need to see what the end product might look like'* (Int, p.5) while Survey respondent 33 noted his/her use was motivated by a need *'to enable students (who are often returning to study after many years in the workforce) to better understand … assignments'*. Taking this notion further, exemplars were used because they provided students with a starting point for their task / assignment and showed them how to develop their work:

> *I wanted to show [the students] how to start, how to start the story …. to see the way … how the story unfolds … to show them a pathway'* (Kim, Int, pp.2

They presented students with '*possibilities'* (Henry, Int, p.10) in terms of their own work, opening up *'different ways of conceptualizing, generating and presenting ideas'* (Survey # 43) and showing *'how the task can be done in a variety of different ways'* (Survey # 18). While in some instances the reason for using an exemplar was to familiarize students with the task as a whole:

> *I want to show them the big picture first* (Henry, Int, p.16);

in other cases the purpose was to show the individual components that constituted the whole:

> *[to] show and explain what each step is in relation to the … assignment* (Margie, Int, p.2);
>
> *… [to show] how the different parts of that teaching as inquiry report might look …* (Tessa, Int, p.7).

Exemplars thus functioned as teaching or instructional tools: they were considered part and parcel of '*effective practice'* (Int, p.12) with the capacity to '*bring alive what you are teaching'* (Donna, Int, p.10) and '*mak[e] instruction come alive'* (Gemma, Int, p.6). Hope talked about how she used specific exemplars because they exemplified ways in which students could address issues or pitfalls evident in work from previous cohorts:

> *I also look through where they have fallen down over previous years … if it's their conclusion … I might think these [exemplars] are good examples of conclusions, or it might be their introductions didn't give me a clear picture of where the way is going….typical pitfalls…*(Int, p.8).

More specifically, lecturers used exemplars to deliberately acquaint students with aspects of a task's genre:

> *So looking at an essay format, what would make a good introduction, what would make a good discussion…* (Brittany, Int, p.2);
>
> *I illustrate that kind of narrative writing that is required from an assignment like that …* (Nadia, Int, p.4);
>
> *To illustrate explanations of case studies and literature reviews* (Survey # 11);

depict features of academic writing;

> *Help[ing] them to better conceptualize how to … integrate literature …* (Jenny, Int, p.4);
>
> *[to show] the correct use of APA, how do you cite* (Nadia, Int, p.9);
>
> *[to show] what would make a good discussion … in terms of how you would include literature, what a good reference list might look like …* (Brittany, Int, p.2);

and/or illustrate the level of thinking that was called for:

> *Say it [the task] required an analysis, … I would show a piece of someone's writing that reflected an analysis as opposed to an explanation or description, so I use an exemplar … I don't show them the whole assignment, I pull out [bits] …* (Nadia, Int, p.2).

As an aside, although exemplars were not intentionally used to teach content, Nadia talked about how they provided students with a further opportunity to *'revisit the content'* (Int, p.5). Jenny echoed this sentiment when she explained how, as students engaged with exemplars, they found they were better able to understand the subject matter:

> *… your course content is related to the assignment and therefore you can use them [exemplars] to actually pick up [on] the content … they [students] say, oh I get that now, that makes sense to me … I understand that now* (Int, pp.10-11).

It seemed that the way in which peers expressed their ideas helped students to make better connections and/or make sense of the content.

***How lecturers use exemplars to clarify task / assignment components***

How then did lecturers use exemplars to clarify task / assignment requirements? Common to nearly all lecturers, was the use of exemplars to draw students' attention to important components that needed to be included in an assignment. Tina, for example, considered the use of exemplars a *'good teaching opportunity'* in that well-chosen extracts illustrated what *'we are asking students to do'* (Int, p. 1). However, with the exception of Henry who used the full exemplar to provide an overall picture of the task, student exemplars were rarely used in their entirety:

> *I don't use the whole assignment, there might be part of the assignment which is really good* (Kathryn, Int, p. 4);
> *I never use an exemplar, or hardly use an exemplar as a whole. I would do different parts of it* (Brittany, Int, p.4);
> *I'd never give them a whole essay to read. We do small chunks of work* (Hope, Int, p. 13).

As Nita explained, *'analysing components of a task … enhances student understanding'* of the overall task (Int, p.17). In addition, Brittany, like her colleagues, believed the use of extracts as opposed to complete works, reduced student anxiety. In her experience students felt less overwhelmed or intimated when viewing extracts, feelings that were a distinct possibility if students were to see a complete assignment.

Essentially lecturers used selected extracts to make explicit and to exemplify parts of an assessment task that were required, and to clarify their expectations regarding the level at which these components should be completed. To this end lecturers selected extracts they deemed to be of high quality. As a number explained:

> *We might be looking at introductions* (Hope, Int, p. 2);
> *I have used lit reviews that I have saved from previous courses to show how to do a critical lit review* (Kim, Int, p.3);
> *I'll be using a really good example of the way someone perhaps compared literature with their findings, or the scientific idea in their findings or a really good critical reflection* (Tina, Int, p. 6).

Although high quality exemplars were used, lecturers were judicious in their selection. Work exemplifying a high 'A' was rejected in favour of work that fell into the mid to low 'A' or 'B+' range. Lecturers were cognisant that while showcasing high quality work could act as a *'spur, inspiring students'* (Kathryn, Int, p.10), conversely *'too high a standard would really crush confidence'* (Kim, Int, p.11) with some students thinking the exemplified work was *'completely unobtainable'* (Tessa, p. 15) which in turn could *'scare them off'* (Donna, Int, p.12).

While showcasing high quality work was considered necessary, the majority of lecturers emphasised that 'seeing' an exemplar was insufficient on its own to convey task expectations to students. There had to be *'more than handing out an example'* (Braden, Int, p.5). Jenny felt strongly that *'there is no point in giving them to students if you don't actually unpack them*' (Int, p. 11). Hence it was generally felt that the viewing of exemplars needed to be accompanied by a verbal explanation. In a few instances, this explanation was a lecturer commentary in the form of a *'power-point presentation'* (Tina, Int, p.6). Lecturers showed extracts on screen, drawing attention to what was significant or important within the exemplar:

> *I show them an exemplar of an A assignment [on a power point] and go through that with them slide by slide* (Margie, Int, p. 2);
> *I put it up on a slide … and I will pick out certain things that I want them to particularly take notice of* (Brittany, int, p. 6);

and then told students how these components exemplified *'a high-quality assignment'* (Tina, Int, p1). This practice of telling seemed more prevalent in large classes where a 'lecture' style of delivery was the norm. Following these presentations students were however *'given the opportunity to ask questions'* (Tina, Int, p.6).

More frequently, especially when class sizes were smaller, it seemed lecturers got students to process what was contained within the exemplars by distributing hard copies of an exemplar(s), requiring students to read them and then to engage in a *'general discussion'* (Gemma, Int, p.4) about specific

aspects of the work. Hope for example saw her role as *'the facilitator of discussion'* (Int, p. 7). Likewise, Tessa emphasised the importance of questioning students to draw attention to *'the way in which person X or Y had done something'* (Int, p.10). Many lecturers stressed the need to *'circulate and listen'* to what students have to say (Kathryn, Int, p.11) so they could engage students in a meaningful discussion, either in small groups or as a class.

Lecturers however were cognisant that exemplars used to illustrate task components could have a constraining and limiting effect on students' assignment work if *'students go for a recipe mode'* (Donna, Int, p.5), particularly if they were worried '*I won't get an A'* (Kim, Int, p. 8). Consequently, most lecturers tried to convey that they were *'not looking for a recipe here'* (Tessa, Int, p. 6). Hence when they used exemplars they stressed that they were to be used only as a guide:

> *I gave it out and we discussed it, and the way in which it is supposed to act as a model, not a limiting thing …* (Henry, Int, p. 4);
>
> *If students refer to exemplars I expect that they will do so ONLY to satisfy their questions of how a proposal might be put together and NOT to view them as preferred or recommended models.* (Survey #16);
>
> *They [students] have to keep in mind this is only an exemplar. It's not the only way, it's not the right way, it is one way of doing something.* (Brittany, Int, p.14).

To further counter against students going into *'recipe mode'* lecturers tried to present three or four different exemplars to show there were multiple ways in which an assignment could be completed:

> *I try to look at exemplars of different ways of approaching the task* (Donna, Int, p.5);
>
> *We have about four [exemplars] and what we were trying to show was there was more than one way of doing this* (Tessa, Int, p.6);
>
> *We show three good examples, we told the students these students all ended up with As but they've gone about it in different ways* (Kim, Int, p. 8).

***To help students understand the nature of quality work***

The second purpose underpinning lecturers' use of exemplars was to help students understand task related criteria and standards statements and to '*demonstrate what quality looks like'* (Survey # 1). Exemplar use was undertaken in the first instance to help students understand the features underpinning the criteria and standards that lecturers used when assessing their work:

> *[I use them] to provide an exemplification of … criteria that otherwise may be hard to 'pin down' or make 'real'* (Survey # 23).

From Kathryn's point of view '*[the only way] to show students what the criteria really meant was by exemplifying it with exemplars'* (Int, p.1). She considered the primary '*function of the exemplars is to unpack the criteria for that assignment*' (Int, p.14). Using exemplars to '*illustrate assessment criteria'* (Survey # 45) helped students identify *'expectations inherent in the criteria'* (Gemma, Int, p.3). Exemplars thus functioned as a tool through which the lecturer and class '*unpack the criteria, to actually have a better conversation, more effective conversations around the criteria*' (Jenny, Int, p.1).

In the second instance, exemplars were used in conjunction with criteria and standards statements to show students what comprised the different levels of achievement and the nature of quality work:

> *to illustrate what constitutes a good A, a B or a C based against criteria, we've got the criteria, then we've got the assignment [exemplar], and we look at both of them …* (Margie, Int, p.1)

This sentiment was echoed by Tessa whose '*number two'* reason for using exemplars was to show students '*what … quality in this assignment looks like, what the A criteria look like when they are fulfilled*' (Int, p.8). Exemplars were used alongside statements of criteria so lecturers could '*show how they [the student] could have taken that to the B level or A level … so you can have a good conversation around that'* (Jenny, Int, p.13), *'illustrate what quality [work] looks like … this is what an A grade assignment looks like, to show them the features that made it a high quality assignment*' (Tina, Int., p.1), '*assist students in having an idea of what constitutes high/middle or low quality work*' (Survey # 28) and help them *'know what that*

*difference is between excellent and not excellent … to help students understand the standard a little better'* (Kathryn, Int, p.1; p.9). Exemplars were a teaching tool that '*show[ed] them … and [taught] them how to see what makes [a] good and bad [piece of work], … [and] for what reasons … where you can understand why they're bad, what's going to make you better … excellence is something that you have to learn'* (Braden, Int, pp.2-3). A related purpose was to show students the type of standard expected at a particular level of study, for example *'postgraduate studies … [helping develop] understanding of expectations, understanding what is the difference between and A and B grade, even the criteria'* (Gemma, Int, p.9).

In addition to using exemplars to help students understand criteria and standards and what constitutes quality work, some lecturers indicated they used exemplars to make it clear to students the features and quality (criteria and standards) they or the teaching / marking team look for when evaluating a piece of work – lecturers used exemplars so students [own emphasis]:

> *… know what **we** [lecturers] are looking for …* (Brittany, Int, p.1);
> *[understand] **our** expectations of them ….* (Margie, Int, p.18);
> *know … what **I** am looking for ...[it's] not abstract anymore* (Nadia, Int, p.7);
> *[see] the sort of thing **I** would be expecting* (Henry, Int, p.3);
> *can see what **you** mean and what's in **your** head* (Nita, Int, p.15);
> *get a clearer idea of **my** expectations in relation to that specific assignment* (Survey # 18).

Statements such as these give the impression that lecturers may, when evaluating student work, draw on additional criteria to those published. Alternatively, it may be that lecturers see some of the published criteria as more salient than others and use exemplars and rubrics to highlight these important features.

With reference to developing students' understandings about criteria and standards statements and the nature of quality work, Henry was the only person who talked about how he intentionally used exemplars as a tool to *'illustrate aspects of judgment making'* (Int, p.6). Here he used exemplars for the purpose of providing students with insights into, and to generate discussion about, the ways in which he makes judgments about the quality of a piece of work and why he awards particular

levels of achievement. In doing so, his students became familiar with '*fuzzy criteria, they know about trade-offs, they know about all these ways in which final decisions can be made'* (Int, p.6).

***How lecturers use exemplars to help students understand the nature of quality work: Analysing work of varying quality***

Lecturers used exemplars to help students understand the nature of quality work by asking them to make judgements about the value of a given piece of work. Approximately three quarters of those interviewed made reference to using exemplars in this way. Typically, lecturers selected and distributed to students a range of exemplars that illustrated levels of achievement across the spectrum of performance, usually from a mid 'A' through to a 'C'. The students' task was to analyse the work and *'decide what is an A, B, and C'* (Kim, Int, p. 15). When using exemplars for this purpose lecturers tended to use longer extracts of work and in a few cases a fully completed assignment.

While on one hand there was an expectation students would *'make justifiable or defensible statements around what they see and why'* (Tessa, Int, p. 18) lecturers also acknowledged the challenge associated with such a task. Gemma, like a number of her colleagues, talked about the difficulties students experienced in identifying quality work and what distinguished one level of performance from another:

> *Sometimes they get it right and sometimes they get it wrong … they don't necessarily think about what makes a difference between an A and a B for example (Int, p.6).*

To this end lecturers used a number of specific strategies to support student analysis of quality work. In the first instance students' attention was drawn to the assessment criteria. They emphasised to students that criteria were the point of reference to use in order to analyse, critique and make judgements about the work presented:

*I have them analyse exemplars at a range of levels in relation to the criteria and have them identify if/where/how the exemplars exemplify the criteria* (Survey # 8);

*What is it about it that meets the criteria or the rubric?* (Hope, Int, p. 6);

*Can you identify how this links to the criteria?* (Brittany, Int, p. 13);

*I've got them to evaluate the extent to which it meets the criteria* (Nita, Int, p. 4);

*Students use those criteria to critique the exemplar* (Tessa, Int, p. 10).

However, the expectation that students use criteria to make judgements about the quality of a piece of work demanded that students had a thorough and deep understanding of the criteria. Without this understanding students would not *'be able to make justifiable or defensible statements around what they can see and why that matches with the particular criteria'* (Tessa, Int, p. 18). Therefore, in a number of instances lecturers spoke of taking time to *'unpack the criteria in a verbal way'* (Jenny, Int, p. 3) to try and achieve a shared understanding of the criteria so that everybody was *'on the same page'* (Hope, Int, p. 16). Seemingly the preferred strategy to encourage discussion of criteria was to ask students to work in pairs or small groups to talk about what the criteria meant and to then in their groups critique the selected exemplars. As Nita explained:

*They do it in pairs have the criteria there … they just talk their way through it with a peer or group of three* (Int, p. 13).

Once discussion regarding the criteria had occurred, another strategy was to get students to *'search for evidence re the degree to which assessment criteria had been met/not met'* (Survey # 18). This search for evidence appeared to be foundational to students' critique as they were expected to find evidence that could be used to support and defend their judgements:

*they'll say you know I though this one was an A because …. Maybe this one wasn't because of this…* (Gemma, Int, p. 4);

*is there anybody who doesn't agree with that?* (Brittany, Int, p 8).

The search for evidence appeared to be related to each particular criterion:

*[Look for] evidence of this criteria [sic] or that criteria* (Jenny, Int, p. 3);

*See whether those [particular criteria] are evident in some of the examples* (Margie, Int, p. 9);

*They've gone through the assignment and ticked that criteria [sic]* (Margie, Int, p. 17);

*They've got their headings based on criteria where they have to say 'is this showing personal voice?'* (Nita, Int, p.4).

Whilst lecturers believed students' critique of multiple exemplars allowed them *'to engage a lot more in terms of understanding deeply what quality and not quality looks like'* (Tessa, Int, p. 8) it would appear students' notions of quality were developed through a close examination and application of each single criterion to a piece of work:

*I would ask people to discuss how well the task meets each criterion* (Survey # 31);

*Asking them to tell me how they feel - if that assignment is evidence of this criteria [sic], that criteria* (Jenny, Int, p. 3).

***How lecturers use exemplars to help students understand the nature of quality work: Making suggestions to improve the quality of the exemplars***

A smaller group of lecturers required students to analyse and make judgements about the quality of an exemplar, extending this activity by asking students to make suggestions about how the exemplar could be improved:

*We discuss the strengths of each and ways in which the exemplar can be improved* (Survey # 8);

*I ask the students to identify how and in what ways the exemplars have addressed the task and the assessment criteria and to identify possible areas for improvement* (Survey # 21);

*How could it be improved? What parts are particularly good? What needed more work to go up a level?* (Hope, Int, p.6);

*How would you improve? What would you do to make it different?* (Margie, Int, p. 15).

However, these lecturers differed in their choice of exemplars to use when asking students to make suggestions for improvement. On one hand Kathryn, who placed great emphasis on the importance of asking students to make improvements to work, was adamant that she would only *'use exemplars that are in the A grade category … because I want them to aim high*' (Int, p. 5). In her experience when she asked students *'What's wrong with these A grade assignments? [While] these are all As where did they miss the mark? How can you make these A grade assignments better?* (Kathryn, Int, p. 7) the students did an *'extraordinary'* job at finding areas for improvement. Despite her use of high quality exemplars, students were still able to *'come up with ideas'* (Int, p.7).

Conversely, Jenny, Tessa and Hope rejected the use of high quality exemplars for this activity. For them it was necessary to *'use exemplars that are not that good so they can actually critique them and look how they can improve them'* (Jenny, Int, p. 1). Tessa felt confident that her use of poorer quality exemplars was warranted as the examination of high quality exemplars failed to challenge students in relation to what aspects of the work could be improved. In contrast, an examination of lower quality exemplars *'heightens students' awareness*' (Tessa, Int p. 8) of what might be improved and in doing so contributed to their overall notion of the nature of quality.

While Hope also used exemplars of a lower quality to determine how work could be improved she cautioned that all critique needed to done in a sensitive manner and with the '*right'* intent. Asking students to critique lower quality work was not '*an opportunity to bag somebody's work'* or to simply say *'what's wrong with it'* (Hope, Int, p.9). Rather she emphasised to her students that a key reason for identifying improvements was to expand their personal knowledge of how such improvement might be carried out.

***To motivate and build students' self-efficacy***

The third purpose articulated by the lecturers addressed student motivation. Respectively, Brittany, Kim and Kathryn expressed this purpose as follows:

> *I would say to them [students] look this is really an outstanding essay, and the reason why I am sharing this with you is because I want you to aspire to that …* (Int, p.10);
>
> *[I use them] just to encourage people that you know it's achievable,* (Int, p.2);
>
> *[to] spur them on … inspire them …* (Int.p.10).

Nadia explained how to her *'an exemplar is more than just 'this is how you do your assignment'…'* (Int, p.5). Like Nita, she used exemplars because they developed students' confidence in their ability to undertake the designated task and engendered an 'I can do it' mindset:

> *… the motivation, engagement is really a big part … I want them to feel confident going in to that assignment … that 'can do, I can do this' [attitude]…* (Nadia, Int, p.5);
>
> *I think it can build up some self-efficacy …* (Nita, Int, p.8).

Mention was also made of using exemplars with the deliberate intent of motivating students to work to achieve high quality work, and as a consequence, lift levels of achievement:

> *[I use them] to promote the pursuit of excellence*, *writing to A range criteria* (Survey # 46);
>
> *usually you are trying to use the exemplars to lift the level a bit …* (Kim, Int, p.2).

Gemma spoke about how she used exemplars to give students '*reassurance'* (Int, p.2) in relation to the task while Braden mentioned that he used exemplars to '*reassure students that struggle is normal*' (Int, pp.1-2). In a similar vein, Donna talked about using exemplars as they are '*comforting'* (Int, p.3) for students, a term also used by Tessa who linked this sense of comfort to building in her students, primarily those in their first year of study, a heightened sense of self-efficacy:

*[exemplars] give students a sense of comfort that they can do this, a sense of oh so that's what that looks like, so all right, I can do that – particularly with students who are new like in their first year ….* (Int, p.3).

A number also made reference to using exemplars with a view to reducing levels of student anxiety in relation to successful task completion:

*[I use exemplars] to lower anxiety levels* (Survey # 3);

*[to] reduce[s] their anxiety about what they have to produce and what they are going to be assessed on … they can see the final output that they need to do* (Nita, Int, pp.7-8);

*I also wanted to boost the confidence of mature students returning to study when they were feeling nervous and could easily get overwhelmed when much seemed shrouded in mystification* (Survey # 11).

***To promote reflection on works-in-progress***

A fourth over-arching reason for using exemplars was the anticipated impact this would have on students' own work. It was apparent in the lecturers' discourse that they expected their students, through the aforementioned practices, to acquire knowledge pertaining to task components, assessment criteria, and expected levels of performance. In turn, they assumed students would reflect upon and utilise this knowledge in the generation of their own work. This assumption was implicit in their talk rather than stated 'up front' [own emphasis]:

*They go away and* ***think what they want to do in their assignment*** *… look at the criteria, look at the exemplar and decide on their own* (Donna, Int, p. 5);

*the opportunity to evaluate other people's work …* ***gives them [students] a standard for their own learning*** (Nita, Int, p. 17);

*when I [student] come back and look at my own work I am going to be* ***thinking about what needs to be the feature of my work*** (Tessa, Int, p.16).

Thus as a result of their work with exemplars, there was an expectation students would transfer their understandings of the task and the nature of quality work, to their own work.

***Promoting reflection on works-in-progress: Comparing works-in-progress to exemplars***

Hope was the only participant who talked about how she deliberately used exemplars as a point of reference against which she expected students to reflect on the quality of their works-in-progress. She explained that in some of her classes she had started to build in time where students were expected *'to bring their work'* to compare to a selection of exemplars. Through a comparison of their work to an exemplar she intended that students would reflect on the quality of their work and as a result *'rework the piece and bring it back again'* (Hope, Int, p.11).

Although Hope was the exception in regard to using exemplars in this manner, several of her colleagues recognised the potential of exemplars as a point of reference in prompting students' reflection on the quality of their works-in-progress. Jenny for instance had come to the realisation that if students '*are not consciously linking what they are reading with what they are / need to be doing, they may not necessarily look at it in a critical enough way to learn from it'* (Int, p. 17). Recognising the potential of exemplars as a *'reflective tool'* Henry was considering how he could use them as a benchmark against which his students could *'check back to their own work'* (Int, p. 18). In a similar vein, Tessa thought her next step when using exemplars would be to ask students to use the exemplars *'to look at their own work and think about what needs to be done'* (Int, p.8). Hence, both Henry and Tessa planned to expand their exemplar-based repertoire of strategies in the future to include the comparison of works-in-progress to exemplars.

In the next section three case studies based on observational data are presented. These depict specific ways in which exemplars were used and the purposes

underpinning their use. In addition they provide insights into lecturers' pedagogical decision making in relation to their use.

## 8. OBSERVATION CASE STUDIES

This section addresses findings from the classroom observations of Nadia, Hope and Tessa as they used exemplars with their respective classes. As noted earlier, observation of teachers' practice is a distinctive feature of the current project – few studies in the area have gathered data in this manner.

**Nadia**

Nadia was teaching a class of forty-six graduate students during a two-hour class session in a professional education course that was part of the students' teacher education programme. She had more than fifteen years teaching experience at the tertiary level and had used exemplars with her classes for much of this time. The observed class was conducted in a small lecture theatre organized along traditional lines – as such it had seven rows of tiered seating with each row having seating for between 14-16 students. These seats faced two large screens located at the front of the theatre. A teaching console was positioned to one side of the screens on the bottom platform of the theatre, facing the rows of seats. The console contained a computer and document camera. It was from this position that Nadia operated her power point presentation and used the document camera.

The observed session took place in week six of a ten-week course, a time when students were preparing for their second of two course assignments. Students had access to assignment details along with the marking rubric through CANVAS, a Cloud based on-line Learning Management system. In short students were required to interview two children from their Practicum-based class, analyze and interpret the data gathered with reference to key theoretical concepts covered in the course, and

present an oral outline of findings to a small group followed by a written discussion with reference to two or three key themes.

For the first 70 minutes of the session Nadia used a series of power point slides to engage students in an interactive presentation of course content. The remainder of the session (35-40 minutes) was spent addressing the assignment. It was during this time that Nadia utilized exemplars. Analysis of the observation data (Obs notes) and of Nadia's post-observation interview (PO Int) revealed two overarching purposes in her use of exemplars: to clarify the nature of the assignment and to help students understand what counts as quality work with reference to the criteria on the marking rubric.

To introduce the exemplar related part of the session Nadia projected a copy of the assignment onto one of the screens at the front of the lecture theatre, briefly outlining protocols associated with the conduct of the interviews. She then projected onto the second screen an exemplar of a transcribed interview which she used to explain '*what I would do*' (Obs notes) to determine key concepts and themes ie: analyze a transcript. As Nadia read the transcript aloud, she circled key words and phrases, talking to the class about why these highlighted particular concepts and how they could then be organized into key themes. She told the class that she would be looking for '*cogency and depth*' (Obs notes) in the themes, using the exemplar to show how these qualities could be developed in relation to specific themes.

A copy of the five 'A' level criteria statements for the written discussion was then projected onto one screen and the second screen was used to show extracts from selected exemplars. Nadia referred to the criteria and extracts as she explained and showed the class *'how I'm going to decide if you have done an A plus essay'* (Obs notes). She used only the 'A' level statements to help students understand criteria and standards statements and the nature of quality work for two reasons: firstly in response to time constraints as she considered exposure to statements at all levels to be time consuming and somewhat confusing; and secondly *'because it is setting that high standard, that high expectation … they want to know how to do well … they*

*should all be aiming for an A'* (p.1). Nadia selected each of the five rubric statements at the 'A' level in turn, and as the class read through an extract from an exemplar on the document camera she asked them to identify evidence of the criterion, whether the instance identified met the stipulated level of achievement and if not, how it might be improved. Throughout this part of the session students interjected with questions and comments that Nadia used to clarify both the assignment and the criteria. Nadia also repeatedly emphasized the importance of developing a narrative or story based around the key themes in contrast to a text-book derived description of the theme, using extracts from the exemplar to illustrate:

> *[pointing to a part in the exemplar – see here] the narrative of the student(s) [children] will drive [the essay], I want an essay about kids, to know you really get that kid, use the literature to support the narrative, not the other way around … [look] here …* (Obs notes).

To conclude this activity the class was asked to tell Nadia '*what am I looking for, tell me back*'. Students responded with terms such as '*insightful discussion',* '*student focused narrative',* and *'student responses'* (Obs notes).

The class discussion was followed by a group activity where threesomes were given four exemplars of a completed discussion [each exemplar being 3-4 pages in length] from a previous cohort of students. During her post-observation interview Nadia talked about how she had selected four exemplars so students could see the different ways in which *'the strong narrative of the kids [children] [had been developed] and [how] the research supports it …'* (PO Int, p.2). Three of these exemplars were in the 'A' range of achievement, the fourth in the 'C' range; the latter was selected as a *'confidence builder'* (PO Int, p.2) and the 'A' exemplars as a challenge:

> *… the more capable ones like to rise to that challenge of … thematic weaving, that sort of cogency of good writing …* (PO Int, p.2).

The group task was to *'use the rubric'* (Obs notes) and identify whether and how each piece of work met the 'A' range criteria. Nadia recommended to the class that '*the most worthwhile conversation to have is around the word 'insightful', what does it look like … it is always subjective but talk about it …'* (Obs notes). The students had 12-15 minutes to work on this task, some groups remaining in their seats while

others dispersed to areas just outside the lecture theatre. At this stage Nadia moved around groups, listening to but not participating in the discussions:

> *I let the … students get on with it and have that discussion and then collectively they can ask me questions at the end because otherwise I'm too dominant … it is that maximum use of time …* (PO Int, p.2).

Given the short amount of time allocated to the task, some groups focused on one or two exemplars only, others divided the exemplars between groups members with a short report back. When all groups had returned to the lecture theatre Nadia led a class discussion about each of criteria statements in turn asking for specific illustrations from the exemplars that evidenced achievement or non-achievement of the criterion. To illustrate - in relation to the rubric statement *'highly relevant student responses/observations'* students identified instances in the exemplars where children's voices came through strongly; in relation to the statement *'supported by judicious use of theory and literature'* one group highlighted the over-use of quotes in one of the exemplars; and with reference to the *'fluency and coherence'* of the writing one exemplar was identified as weak in this area with suggestions made about how it could be improved. In addition, the importance of getting a balance between description and discussion (one exemplar focusing on the former at the expense of the latter) was raised by one of the groups. The following exchange typified the reporting back session:

> Nadia: *How or where might you use a reference?*
>
> Student 1: *To make a statement that is not general knowledge;*
>
> Student 2: *When summarizing ideas from research, to support a claim you're making.*
>
> Nadia: *You used the words 'make a claim', when you do this [make a claim] you need a reference, you can't make unsubstantiated statements like …*
>
> Student 3: *One sentence here [reads it out from one of the exemplars] it's a claim [so it needs a reference] ….*

At the close of the session Nadia asked for all copies of the exemplars to be returned to her and she indicated her availability either in person or via email if students had further questions or queries.

During her post observation interview Nadia explained that her greatest challenges in using exemplars with the observed class were in balancing time spent on delivering the course content with additional activities such as exemplar use, and how best to manage such activities with a large group of students. In response to these challenges she made the decision to have a short, sharp exemplar related session with the class addressing only the 'A' level criteria:

> *So pitching it at the 'A' level I think minimizes the difficulty … when you have to get through so much material, you are always having to manage time so at every turn I have to make decisions … we have got the time constraint so over the years I have worked out ways of getting maximum useful input with the minimum amount of time, so I do only pitch (exemplar use) at the 'A' [level]* (PO Int, p.1).

She indicated that her work with exemplars with another class was however quite different – she *'wouldn't do it at that pace'* (p.2) and would use extracts rather than whole exemplars.

**Hope**

Hope had used exemplars for the 8 years she had been teaching in the faculty and before that, when teaching in primary schools. She was observed teaching a class of 28 graduate students enrolled in a curriculum course which was part of their teacher education programme. The observation took place in the tenth week of the course. Twenty of the students were absent from the observed class, a factor Hope attributed to the number of assignments due during that particular week and this being the only class scheduled in that week for the cohort. The large rectangular teaching space where the class took place contained 10 large tables each of which could comfortably sit six students. Hope positioned herself at the front of the room by a spare table on which she placed her teaching resources. For the observed lesson the students sat around six of the tables in the first two thirds of the room – one group of six students, three groups of five students, one group of four and one group of three students.

Hope began the class with a '*recap of PPDAC from last week'* (Obs notes). PPDAC [Problem; Planning, Data gathering; Analysis; Conclusions] is an acronym for '*the key*

*statistical investigation cycles used in schools'* (PO Int, p.1). In her introduction to the session Hope elicited from the class the names of the stages in the cycle, with students then providing a description of each stage and what it entailed. She then handed each student a one-page exemplar of a PPDAC for a statistics problem that had been completed by a student two years ago. The class was given time to read the exemplar. Hope explained to the class that they would be asked to complete a similar piece of work during their upcoming test, so to familiarize them with the task and revise their understandings and application of the cycle, she was asking them to work in groups to provide feedback on the exemplar in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. There were thus two purposes informing and underpinning her use of the exemplar.

Hope explained during the post-observation interview that she began a number of her sessions with the class, in this manner. On this occasion she had chosen this single, particular exemplar because it '*has got more than, not just gaps, there is [sic] major gaps in this one'* (PO Int, p.3). She did not consider this an issue as she felt the class had a *'reasonably good understanding of it [PPDAC] so they should be able to unpack this'* (P.3), identify the weaknesses and provide quality feedback about how it could be improved. Each group was asked to appoint a person responsible for recording the group's feedback and reporting this back to the class. The students then proceeded to analyse and discuss the exemplar with reference to '*what should be included in a PPDAC'* (Obs notes). Like Nadia, as the class engaged with the task, Hope walked around the groups, listening in to the conversations:

> *I try not to say too much, I mean I wander just to make sure they are on task and if I see a real something that they are way off track [with] I might ask a question and say have you [thought about …] but I just think actually they have got to have some time to just think and do it for themselves* (PO Int, p.6).

Once the groups had completed the task, Hope asked for a volunteer to record the feedback from the class discussion. This student was given the task of uploading the feedback onto CANVAS alongside with the exemplar, so students could refer to both documents when revising for the test.

Hope considered the class reporting back session important for two reasons. In the first instance it provided students with an opportunity to *'hear what other people are saying and how other people have expanded on it and made a better response to that section'* (PO Int, p.6) while also giving her an opportunity to *'identify where they have still got misconceptions and I can … [re]address it again'* (p.2). The latter was exemplified when the groups were reporting back on the Data and Analysis sections of the cycle. Not only did the exemplar conflate these two steps of the process, the students also had difficulty separating them and providing appropriate feedback. Hope used the reporting back process to clarify what each of these steps involved and how they could be improved in the exemplar:

> Student: *We think some of this [in the data section] could go in the plan, put the reference to the school councilors in the plan, it's not data*.
> Hope: *Why [is it not data]? …* (Obs notes);
>
> Student: *The first sentence [in the analysis section] is a bit odd …*
> Hope: *did this [statement in the exemplar] link back nicely to previous sections?*
> Students [in unison]: *No*
> Hope: *How could you improve it?* (Obs notes).

The students provided a range of answers to this question. Each response was considered and if agreed upon, included in the class feedback sheet. Once the class had completed the five sections of the cycle Hope asked the class for an indication of their level of confidence in terms of completing a similar task. Students used a thumbs up / thumbs down sign to indicate this with some wavering between the two and others using the thumbs up sign. Given the number of students who indicated they were still a little unsure, questions were invited and points clarified. When no further questions and/or comments were forthcoming Hope moved on to the teaching focus for the session – probability.

**Tessa**

Tessa was an experienced tertiary educator who had worked in Teacher Education (TE) for 20+ years, where she taught a range of undergraduate and postgraduate

classes. Her use of exemplars with students in these classes spanned the last five or six years, during which time her practice has continued to undergo refinement. One of the major refinements Tessa had made was to move from using exemplars in a single teaching session to integrating use across several sessions.

Two observations of Tessa's exemplar use with one postgraduate class were undertaken midway through a course and occurred one week apart. The class observed had relatively small numbers, and given its size, it was held in a room that was organised to allow for students to sit in small groups. The groups were student selected with the fifteen students spread fairly evenly across four tables. The classroom was equipped with the usual technology - a computer and document camera and large screen at the front of the room. Each of the observed sessions was approximately 90 minutes long during which time Tessa's sole focus was on exemplars, with students engaged in a range of activities.

Prior to the observations, students had undertaken an inquiry project using the Ministry of Education's Inquiry Framework. This school-based inquiry had been the first assignment for the course which required students to identify a focus for teaching, implement a teaching and learning plan and collect a range of evidence to evaluate the impact on children's learning, and identify next steps for teaching and learning. At the time of the observations, students were beginning to prepare for the second assignment, which was essentially a critical reflection on their inquiry. This reflection was to take the form of a 2500-3000-word report, accompanied by a set of appendices to be used as illustrative devices to show students' *'decision-making and practice'* (Assignment # 2).

Through her experience of using exemplars Tessa had learned that she had to be *'really clear about what you are intending to achieve during the session when you are using an exemplar'* (PO Int, p.14) and once she was clear about the purpose, to '*scaffold students so they are able to make connections between the things they were doing in class'* (PO Int, p.3) and what they would need to do to complete the assignment. In the first observed session Tessa used a high-quality exemplar to illustrate components of the task and to build students' understanding of quality.

Expecting students to utilise knowledge gained from the first session in the second session, Tessa asked students to analyse and make judgements about an exemplar of an unknown quality and to offer suggestions for improvement. During the two observations Tessa's students engaged with the exemplars through a range of activities.

Given that assignment two was a *'large assignment'* Tessa was cognisant that students needed to gain *'a holistic understanding of the assignment … to get a sense of what the assignment would look like'* (PO Int, p.2). Therefore, at the start of the first observation session students were each given a hard copy of a report completed by a student from a previous year's cohort. This was the full copy of the report, including appendices, which students were subsequently able to keep for future reference. A criteria sheet in the form of an assessment rubric was also handed out although no specific mention was made of it at this time.

At the time of distribution, students were told this was an 'A' assignment and were asked as they read it through to consider *'how the assignment exemplified an A'* (Obs notes). From Tessa's perspective students exposure to an 'A' grade assignment was foundational to their understanding. In the first instance, she wanted students to *'see what a really good assignment looked like, how the criteria could be well met, so they could be thinking this is what I need to be aiming to achieve'* (PO Int, p.1). Secondly, she hoped they would acquire knowledge that would *'help them to look more critically at an assignment that was less good'* (PO Int, p.1).

The first activity students engaged in, was 10 minutes of sustained silent reading of the exemplar, with the instruction to '*flick through'* (Obs notes) to ensure they would look at it in its entirety. Once this was done they were asked to discuss in groups '*what has been done effectively in this assignment?*'. Rather than make reference to the criteria at this time, Tessa drew students' attention to some general areas they might consider in regard to the work's quality. Assignment structure, layout, flow, the genre, and use of appendices were all mentioned. As group discussions occurred Tessa moved around, sitting and talking with each for three or four minutes. This she saw as an opportunity to determine if *'everybody was on the*

*right track'* and if so *'affirm that understanding'* (PO Int, p.4). Movement around the groups was also seen as a way of facilitating discussion if it got *'blocked'.* In her experience, some students take time to *'cotton on'* (PO Int, p7) and quite a bit of talking is necessary before students *'start to come on board'.* To this end during the group discussions Tessa was seen asking prompting questions such as '*what do you notice about use of personal voice/ developing an argument? How have the appendices / literature/ been used?'* (Obs notes). A number of students also took the opportunity to ask Tessa questions during the time she sat with their group.

Following the group work, Tessa facilitated a class discussion focussed on identifying the key features of what makes an 'A' grade assignment. It was not until a number of features were noted and recorded that students' attention was then drawn to the criteria. Tessa's decision to delay discussion of the criteria until this time was a deliberate choice. In her opinion, discussion of criteria prior to seeing the exemplar would have been unproductive as students *'wouldn't have sufficient understanding of the criteria as yet'* (PO Int, p.1). Hence, a class discussion of the criteria did not occur until about 45 minutes into the session. This discussion focused on each criterion in the 'A' level of achievement: firstly, through talking about the ways in which each criterion could be met - what content should be included and the level of detail needed; and secondly, Tessa shared with the class her interpretation of each criterion, hence what she would be looking for when marking and how she would allocate marks. At this time Tessa indicated that in some criteria there were two aspects of learning that she would be looking for within the report. To illustrate she focused on criterion one where students had to demonstrate *'comprehensive understanding of the key facets of practice'* and **how** these facets would lead to *'positive outcomes'* for priority learners (Obs notes).

Moving on from the class discussion, each group was then allocated a specific criterion with the instruction to *'look for evidence / specific examples of how this criteria [sic] has been met'* and *'discuss how the work could be improved'* (Obs notes). As with the other activities students engaged fully, with all group members making comments. Once again Tessa moved around the various groups. During this time, her questions to students focused on the kinds of evidence they had identified

and what this meant in terms of quality. Questions such as *'You don't think this provides strong evidence, why is this?'* and *'What would you have to do to make this stronger?'* (Obs notes) prompted students to debate and defend their judgements and to show ways in which work could be improved. As Tessa later explained she hoped the search for evidence would help students '*deepen their understanding about what they were doing and [what] their assignment might look like and how they might go about making evident those particular criteria [in their work]'* (PO Int, p.4). To conclude this activity students were asked to *'come up with an overall mark for the piece of work'*. These estimates were then shared with the class as a whole. While there were some minor discrepancies regarding the mark each group awarded, all fell into the 'A' range. Tessa took this opportunity to emphasise and explain to students some of the difficulties inherent in grading work.

The class session ended with Tessa handing out another exemplar. Students were told it had *'passed'* with no further indication given as to what level of performance it exemplified. In preparation for the next class session students were asked to *'read it, mark it using the marking sheet [criteria], place it as an A, B or C and provide advice regarding how the assignment could be improved'* (Obs notes). During the second observation session, after a brief recap on the assignment itself and a reminder of the criteria, students engaged in a range of activities where they had to make both qualitative and quantitative judgements regarding the quality of the exemplar they had critiqued independently.

Building on from the work completed in the previous session and by students independently, the first task students had to complete was to estimate the assignment grade. This was an independent task where they were told to *'be brave and put your stake in the sand'* (Obs notes). These grades were then recorded and students were asked to share their reasoning with group members by '*commenting on things that have been done well and things that need improvement'* (PO Int, p.8). Once again Tessa moved around the groups, noting while there was a range of grades, this was not unusual. To address the discrepancies in grading she emphasised to group members the need to engage in a sustained debate using the criteria and the evidence before them to justify and defend the grade they had

given. Sitting with a group and making comments such as *'Think about the depth they have gone to. Do the links between facets and actual practice show depth of understanding? Are there clear links or is it left to the reader to interpret? How could the facets have been more integrated with practice?* (Obs notes) prompted students to search for evidence and engage in a focused debate. Recognising the challenge in determining quality, Tess allocated over 40 minutes to this activity which culminated in all groups being asked to *'look at each of the criteria [and determine] whether the work fits an A, B or C'* (Obs notes). Essentially students had to decide the degree to which the exemplar met criterion one, criterion two etcetera.

With the aim of gaining some consensus about the level of performance related to each criterion Tessa then facilitated a class discussion. Going through each of the criteria students were asked to indicate through a show of hands who thought the work exemplified an 'A', 'B' or 'C' grade. Students were invited to make comments regarding the reasons for their decisions, and to make suggestions for improvement. As improvements were noted Tessa drew students' attention to how such improvements might be incorporated into their own work:

> Tessa: *Comments about how that criteria [sic] has been met?*
> Student 1*: Its more at a surface level and not so much how it relates to their teaching*
> Tessa*: Would anyone like to add to that?*
> Student 2*: They weren't building a strong argument*
> Tessa: *How might it be improved?*
> Student 3*: Use personal voice more*
> Student 4: *Having stronger justification for what you did*
> Tessa: *Yes, it's not an essay [what you are asked to do]. Think about how you are going to communicate your decision making and its effects on learning / practice …* (Obs notes).

To draw the discussion of a particular criterion together the grade estimate was revisited:

> *'So are we looking in the B range, does the assignment exemplify a sound understanding?'* (Obs notes).

To close the session students' attention was again drawn to how the exemplar could be improved – *'what feedback would we give this student on how to improve?'* (Obs notes). Students came up with a comprehensive list of possible improvements which reflected the previous discussions:

> *'more detailed, more explicit links, clarity in structure, personal voice, use of subheadings / focus questions as a structure'* (Obs notes).

At the end of this activity, the class concluded.

## 9. DISCUSSION

**The importance of goal knowledge**

For students, successful achievement in academic settings is dependent on compliance with the requirements of their assessment tasks (Sadler, 2010; 2014). However despite the issuing of detailed specifications and exhortations from lecturers to 'address the task', student work often fails to comply with what is required (Sadler, 2014). In some instances, as indicated by participants in the current study, the way in which the task is written is unclear and/or ambiguous; in other instances task specifications lack detail and/or students are unfamiliar with the genre (eg: report; literature review) or class of response (eg: analysis; critique) that is called for. Sadler (2002) has argued no matter how detailed the specifications for a task they can never go far enough, hence the need for tangible representations of the finished product to be made available to students. Exemplars are well suited for this undertaking as they 'convey messages that nothing else can' (p.136). Lecturers in the current study commented at some length on the clarifying power of concrete, authentic examples of completed tasks when working with students. Exemplars, when used in their entirety, have the potential to provide students with 'goal knowledge' (Sadler, 2014), that is a picture of what the final work should look like. Students need to understand the goal(s) of their learning and 'where they are going' so they can deliberately and thoughtfully shape their response to a task. Goal knowledge is not only fundamental to successful task interpretation it serves as the point of reference and is a necessary condition for feedback and self-monitoring (Butler & Winne, 1995; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008). If students misunderstand the goal of a task 'they may engage in inappropriate tactics for completing the task or they may adopt inappropriate [points of] reference for monitoring qualities of their work' (Butler & Winne, 1995, p.257).

***Use of the whole versus extracts***

Although lecturers talked about using exemplars with the intent of helping students visualize the end product, they did not necessarily always show or use the complete piece of work. Rather, they typically used extracts. This practice was justified on the grounds that exposure to the complete work could be overwhelming and/or intimidating for students so extracts were carefully selected to illustrate specific

*components* such as a good introduction, a critical reflection, narrative writing, APA protocols and the like. These extracts were drawn from pieces of work in the low to mid 'A' range as lecturers took into account the possible impact of A+ extracts on students' motivation and sense of self-efficacy. When making decisions about which exemplars to use (A range, B range etc) and how to use them (whole versus parts) lecturers were mindful of the need to achieve a balance between showing quality work that would inspire excellence without undermining confidence. While student confidence can increase as a result of use, studies have shown that for some students, exposure to exemplars does result in increased anxiety and a loss of confidence (Hendry et. al., 2016; Rust, et. al., 2003). Lecturers thus need to consider the differential emotional reactions of students and implications of these reactions for learning and successful task completion (Hendry & Yukic, 2014) when selecting and using exemplars.

Notwithstanding the rationale provided by the lecturers in the current study for working with extracts as opposed to the whole, this practice can, unless carefully managed, undermine the development of students' goal knowledge and their understanding of the nature of quality work. A piece of work is more than the sum of its constituent parts. Breaking down the whole into individual components of a piece of work such as an introduction, position statement or conclusion, ignores the multi-dimensional nature of complex pieces of work and the relationships and dependencies between the various parts of the whole (Sadler, 2007). In particular, focusing on individual components has the potential to limit the ability of students to see and talk about the ways in which these work together to form the whole: the more something is broken down, 'the harder it is to make the bits work together as a whole' (Sadler 2007, p. 389). When students become preoccupied with individual components, they lose sight of the 'big picture' and this can result in a fragmented approach to the task. Lecturers need to be alert to the dangers inherent in using extracts rather than the whole, and at some stage expose students to the completed task in its entirety.

A similar observation can be made regarding the way in which lecturers in the current study habitually asked students to analyze and evaluate exemplars. Here

emphasis was again placed on individual elements with students determining how exemplars measured up in relation to each individual criteria/standard statement from the assessment rubric. The making of criterion-by-criterion judgments reflects an analytic approach to appraisal (Sadler, 2009b), a practice that rests on the assumption criteria do not necessarily overlap or work together; rather they operate as separate and discrete entities. As a consequence, students can end up adopting a convergent, mastery approach to their own work, as they scrutinize it to check each of the required elements is present. Students cannot be blamed for thinking they have been successful once each element is 'ticked off' as present in their work – they have been inducted into the notion that quality resides in the presence of each criterion. Complex tasks of the kind students are asked to produce as part of their studies, as asserted by Gipps (2006), 'are not complex simply because of the number of components involved in them but because of the interactions among the components and the heuristics for calling upon them' (p.19). Furthermore, being bound by criteria that highlight individual elements has the potential to restrict and constrain notions of quality and 'limit students' ability to see beyond to what really matters – the overall effectiveness of the work in achieving the stated purpose' (Sadler, 2014, p.161).

Quality should be regarded as an 'integrative concept that characterizes a piece of work as a whole' (Sadler, 2009, p.160), not as a concept that is created from the sum of a number of judgments made in relation to individual criteria. When thought of in an integrative manner, students can consider the ways in which criteria work alongside and with each other to produce excellence, making judgments with reference to the whole as well as the parts, and justifying their appraisals (Sadler, 1989, 2009a). In addition, they may be alerted to the presence of additional criteria of significance that emerge from a piece of work ie: latent criteria. Collectively, these factors reflect the way holistic multi-criterion judgments are usually constructed by experienced teachers and assessors (Sadler, 2009a). Lecturers' discourse indicated analysis of the exemplars focused on ways in which individual criteria were met with little attention paid to how these work together and the impact of the whole with reference to the intent of the task. As such it seems they may have missed the

opportunity to help students take a more holistic, and integrative view of both the task and the nature of quality work.

**Developing students' evaluative knowledge and expertise**

If students are to take responsibility for improving and furthering their learning, it is essential they develop an appreciation and understanding of quality and the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed and defensible evaluative judgments (Sadler, 1987; 2010). Students, particularly those in the initial stages of their programme, find it challenging to discern quality (Hendry et al., 2012; To &Carless, 2016). Tai et al. (2017) have however argued that as students gain experience in the appraisal of work they 'become more intuitive in their judgments based on previously formed patterns' (p.6), drawing on both global judgments and more explicit criteria and standards to rationalize these judgments. It is widely acknowledged in the literature that the guided analysis and evaluation of exemplars is one of the key ways in which students' evaluative knowledge and skills can be fostered (Carless, 2015; Sadler, 2010; Tai et. al., 2017). An evaluative judgment is comprised of two components: 'understanding what constitutes quality and secondly, applying this understanding through an appraisal of work, whether it be ones' own, or another's' (Tai et. al., 2017, p.5). Lecturers in the current study used exemplars, frequently in conjunction with criteria and standards statements, to help students construct notions of quality and to apply these through the appraisal of selected pieces of work. However, they were to some extent divided about which were the most appropriate pieces of work to use for analysis and evaluation. Some lecturers preferred to use work of the highest quality, noting that this did not necessarily preclude the identification of areas for improvement: others chose to draw on exemplars from the range of achievement ('C' to 'A') in the knowledge that these highlighted different and often quite specific strengths and/or areas for improvement. Utilizing exemplars from the 'B' and 'C' ranges of achievement was of particular importance when students were asked to detect specific features for improvement and to discuss ways in which improvement could be effected.

**Developing students' productive knowledge and expertise**

If students are to take responsibility for furthering and improving their learning, they need opportunities to develop not only their evaluative knowledge and expertise, but also their capacity to monitor and regulate the quality of their work *during* production (Sadler, 1987; 2010). The former is insufficient on its own as it rests on the assumption students will automatically transfer knowledge and skills developed through appraisal, to works-in-progress. Fostering students' productive knowledge and expertise is equally if not more important as it addresses the 'final step' and overall intent of exemplar use - for students to monitor their work during production and to deploy strategies to narrow the gap between current and expected / desired levels of proficiency (Carless, 2015). Missing the opportunity to convey this expectation to students and leaving this step to chance may unintentionally weaken or undermine all that has gone before. There seems to be a tacit assumption, both in the literature and among the majority of those who participated in the current study, that students, as a result of their work with exemplars, will consequentially and inevitably apply insights about the task and quality work to their own work. How lecturers can best facilitate the 'productive transfer or adaptation of insights from exemplars to students' own work is [thus] a critical issue' (To & Carless, 2016, p.749). While a small group of lecturers in the current study addressed the application of evaluative knowledge and skill to pieces of work, they did this in relation to the exemplars, asking students to identify areas for improvement and ways of effecting such improvement. Taking this one step further, a practical strategy mentioned by one of the study participants is to regard exemplars as a point of reference against which to compare one's work during production. This strategy has the potential to function as a catalyst for self-monitoring and self-regulation (Hawe & Dixon, 2017).

# 10. CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

**Conclusions**

Within Higher Education, exemplars have been promoted as an effective teaching tool to support student learning and self-regulation (Hawe et al., 2017; To & Carless, 2015). However, an emphasis in the research literature on garnering students' understandings and experiences of exemplars has been at the expense of discovering how and why lecturers use them in their teaching. The current project thus aimed to address this research gap. Utilizing a mixed methods approach, the project explored lecturers' understandings about and use of exemplars in their teaching. Findings generated from three data sets (questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations) have provided a consistent picture of why and how lecturers use exemplars. Based on these findings a number of conclusions are drawn.

***Conclusion 1***

Overwhelmingly, lecturers in the study recognized the value in using exemplars to support student learning. They realized that notions of quality, critical to assessment success, were often tacitly held inside a lecturer's head (Sadler, 2005), hidden from

students and/or open to interpretation. To address this, lecturers had developed both an awareness and appreciation of the unique role exemplars can play in regard to developing students' understandings of nature of the task and what constitutes quality. Hence lecturers had made a conscious decision to use exemplars as a 'strategic part of the teaching design' (Sadler, 2010, p. 542), albeit with some variations in practice.

While exemplars were seen as a tool that could convey messages about quality in an inimitable way, lecturers also understood that student engagement with these artifacts was critical if they were to be beneficial to learning. Thus, through their use of authentic, student created exemplars, lecturers hoped to pique students' attention and curiosity while at the same time developing in them a sense of confidence, optimism and motivation to achieve, all of which are essential components of student engagement (Zepke & Leach, 2010). Moreover, lecturers understood that simply 'seeing' an exemplar was insufficient on its own to develop student understanding of either the task or its expected quality. Therefore, to varying degrees, to further facilitate student engagement, deliberate attempts were made to provide opportunities for students to make evaluative judgments and to defend and debate these judgments. In doing so lecturers hoped that understandings of quality would be negotiated to reach common understandings.

***Conclusion 2***

Lecturers' exemplar practice was to a certain degree reflective of their understanding of the role that emotions play in learning. Lecturers' awareness that emotions have an impact on student commitment, motivation and their overall outcomes (Bandura, 1977) influenced not only their selection of exemplars but also the way in which they were used. Lecturers' desire to both accentuate the positive effects **and** ameliorate the potential negative effects of exemplar use on student commitment and motivation led them to adopt a largely analytical approach (Sadler, 2009a) to task specification and the specification of quality. Furthermore, consistent with their preferred analytical approach, lecturers' encouraged students to make judgments about quality by focusing on the presence or absence of a single criterion in any given piece of work. In doing so, lecturers missed the opportunity to develop

more complex understandings of quality and how those understandings might be used in the appraisal of work. There seemed to be a lack of recognition of the importance of using a configurational or holistic approach (Sadler, 2009a) in both specifying and judging quality. Whilst lecturers may have tacitly believed that the quality of a piece of work was more than the sum of its parts, exemplars were not used in ways that would convey such a message to students.

***Conclusion 3***

While not always overtly expressed, lecturers' overarching aim in using exemplars was to support students' successful completion of an assessment task. Lecturers recognized that for students to do so, they needed both evaluative knowledge and expertise **and** productive knowledge and expertise. However, while both sets of knowledge and expertise are equally important (Hawe & Dixon, 2014) it would seem lecturers attributed greater importance to the development of students' evaluative knowledge and expertise than their productive knowledge and expertise. In both their articulated and observed practice, lecturers placed a strong emphasis on developing knowledge of the criteria against which work would be judged and how the properties contained within given criteria were exemplified in exemplars. While on one hand lecturers were cognizant of the need for prolonged engagement in evaluative activity shared with an expert other (Polanyi, 1962) this was at the expense of the development of students' productive knowledge and expertise. Although there were instances where lecturers asked students to make productive decisions in relation to the work of others (exemplars), this was not extended to include making judgments and decisions about their own work. Thus, it would seem that the development of students' productive knowledge and expertise was left to chance: it lay outside the auspices and influence of the lecturer. That students need deliberately planned, sustained opportunities to make substantial judgments about the quality of their own work if they are to develop the expertise necessary to improve their work, was given little consideration. Overall there seemed to be a lack of awareness that evaluative and productive knowledge and expertise are inextricably linked and therefore students need in-class opportunities to develop these two skill sets concurrently if they are to become self-regulatory learners. To this end it can be concluded while exemplars were used with the intent of improving

learning, generally lecturers did not talk about using them with the conscious intent to develop student self-monitoring or in a manner that specifically addressed student self-monitoring and/or self-regulation.

**Recommendations**

Whatever its form, the key purpose of educational research is to advance knowledge about teaching and learning with the intent of improving educational practice and educational outcomes for learners (Lingard, 2013). With this purpose in mind consideration has been given to the most appropriate courses of action to take following the completion of the current project: firstly, in regard to the dissemination of results; secondly in relation to supporting those lecturers involved in the study who wish to further refine their practice; and finally, with reference to areas for further investigation.

***The dissemination of findings***

Many of those who work in Faculties of Education, particularly those in Teacher Education programmes, are atypical in regard to their peers in other faculties as they have come into Higher Education with extensive teaching experience. Often, as was the case in the current project, lecturers have had multiple opportunities, over an extended period of time, to build their knowledge and skill in the use of exemplars when they were teaching in the compulsory schooling sector. Thus, in the current study, it was not surprising that lecturers valued the use of exemplars to support student learning, seeing their potential benefits outweighing identified drawbacks.

Although lecturers in the education faculty may have had more experience in the use of exemplars, their use in higher education is not restricted to a particular faculty or subject. Exemplars have been used in a range of disciplines and subjects such as nursing (Anderson, 2004); biology (Orsmond et. al, 2010); business studies (Handley & Williams, 2011; Hawe et al., 2017) and law (Carless, 2015; Newlyn, 2013). Given their employment across various faculties and disciplines, the findings from the current study should be disseminated to a variety of audiences.

To date interim findings have been presented at the 2017 *National Tertiary Learning and Teaching Conference* held in Dunedin, and final findings shared with interview participants from the project (February 2018). Findings will also be communicated to a wider audience through presentations during 2018-2019 at seminars, national and international conferences. Planning is currently underway to continue dialogue with colleagues who are involved in similar work at The University of Hong Kong and with colleagues at the Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE) at Deakin University, Melbourne. This will include discussion around the possible refinement of the questionnaire regarding teachers' use of exemplars and availability of this for use by colleagues / researchers in other institutions. Papers are also planned and/or under way for submission to reputable national and international journals such as *Assessment Matters, Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* and *The Journal of Further and Higher Education*. Of particular interest to these audiences will be the findings related to lecturers' use of the whole versus part(s) of an exemplar, use of an analytical rather than holistic approach to the specification and identification of quality, and the emphasis in class on developing students' evaluative knowledge and skill at the expense of their productive knowledge and skill.

***Developing a community of practice***

While there were variations in understandings and practice, evidence from the current study has suggested there is a group of lecturers within the faculty who share a common interest in the on-going development and refinement of exemplar use. Seemingly this interest has arisen out of a personal commitment to exemplars rather than any systemic or institutional requirement. To date learning about exemplars has occurred at an individual level as lecturers have worked within the confines of their particular courses, sometimes with a colleague but mostly on their own. Given this common interest, it is timely to establish a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to enable these lecturers, and any others who wish to join them, to collaborate over an extended period of time, sharing ideas and strategies with the intent of finding viable solutions to their problems and building innovative practice. With reference to professional learning, Timperley (2011) has emphasized the importance of revisiting partially understood ideas, with sufficient time provided

so participants can absorb new understandings as they are translated into practice. Therefore, whilst it is important that lecturers identify their own starting points, it would be particularly relevant to investigate the ways in which students' productive knowledge and expertise could be developed as part of the teaching programme.

Our involvement with colleagues at the University of Hong Kong and the work they have undertaken was the impetus for the current research. This continuing involvement as well as our association with Deakin University colleagues (Australia) enables us to research within an international community of practice. Working within this community provides us with the opportunity to learn from and share with our peers. In turn, this participation has the potential to establish international research collaborations.

***Future research***

As noted, research regarding lecturers' understandings and use of exemplars is sparse, and the lecturers who participated in the current study may be seen as an atypical sample given their previous teaching experience. Hence there is a need for similar projects to be conducted in faculties and tertiary contexts other than Education. Locating the research in a diverse range of faculties and contexts would contribute to our understanding of how and why lecturers use exemplars. Such research would also provide additional insights into whether or not there are contextual or disciplinary differences that impact on their use. Moreover, to date, the research agenda has focused on the use of exemplars to improve the quality of students' written work (To & Carless, 2015) yet there are many disciplines that require students to go beyond the written word to demonstrate their competence. How exemplars are used in performance-based disciplines or in the sciences would extend our understanding of how a range of discipline-specific artefacts and associated practices might be used to support the development of students' evaluative and productive capabilities.

Observations undertaken within the naturalistic setting of the 'classroom' provide unique insights into practice that cannot be captured by any other means. Undertaken in a principled manner (Delamont, 1992) observations enable

researchers to attend to a selective set of phenomena. In the current literature, the importance of lecturer facilitation of quality dialogue around an exemplar is emphasized (Carless, 2015; Chan & Carless, 2017; Hendry et, al., 2012). Therefore, studies that utilize observational methods, capturing the dialogue between and among lecturers and students, would make a valuable contribution to the field.

A study looking at reasons for the non-use of exemplars is a further possibility – this would provide us with a fuller understanding of lecturers' motives, beliefs and concerns, and whether their non-use is due to reluctance or resistance. It could also provide insights into the best ways in which lecturers could be supported to incorporate exemplars into their practice.

**Final note**

A key outcome of the study was the formation of a group of 'lead' practitioners (community of practice) in the faculty who are interested in critical reflection on and improvement of exemplar use. At the conclusion of the project, lecturers from phases 2 and 3 (those who were interviewed and those who were observed when using exemplars) were invited to a reporting back session. Eleven of the 14 participants attended. The research team presented results and findings with participants reacting to and discussing these during the presentation. Following the presentation, the group engaged in further discussion about the 'big ideas' arising from the project. Six of the attendees (and one who was not able to attend) indicated an interest in continuing to work in this area. These people will form the basis of the group of 'lead' practitioners who will meet at least twice a year to share ideas and engage in critical reflection on exemplar use in their teaching / courses.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A. Questionnaire (Word version).

## AKO - Exemplar Project

### ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE: WHY LECTURERS USE EXEMPLARS, OR NOT, AND HOW THEY USE THEM.

***Exemplars are carefully chosen samples of authentic student work (assignments) that lecturers use as part of their teaching.***

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather your perceptions of exemplar use in the context of higher education: whether you use them or not and why; and if you do use them, how this is carried out and issues associated with their use.

A report of the study will be submitted to Ako Aotearoa and The Faculty of Education and Social Work, with results presented to faculty and at conferences, and published in academic journals. Individual questionnaire responses will not be identifiable in such reports, presentations and publications.

**COMPLETION OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS TAKEN AS CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE.**

Q2 **Demographic information.** ***Please tick the appropriate response:***

Q3 I have teaching in higher education for:

- O 1-5 years (1)
- O 6-10 years (2)
- O 11-15 years (3)
- O 16-20 years (4)
- O 21-25 years (5)
- O 26+ years (6)

---

Q4 I teach undergraduate students

- O Yes (1)
- O No (2)

Q5 I teach postgraduate students

- O Yes (1)
- O No (2)

Q6 I use exemplars in _____ of my courses.

- O All (1)
- O Some (2)
- O None (3)

Q7 I use exemplars with (tick all that apply):

- ☐ Undergraduate students (1)
- ☐ Postgraduate students (2)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (3) _____

Q8 Within which of the following programmes do you mainly teach.

- O Teacher Education (1)
- O Liberal Arts (2)
- O Counselling, Social Work, and Human Services (3)
- O Foundation Studies (4)
- O Other (please specify) (5) _____

Q9 I have been using exemplars in my teaching for:

- O I do not use exemplars (1)
- O 1 - 5 years (2)
- O 6 - 10 years (3)
- O 11 - 15 years (4)
- O 16 - 20 years (5)
- O 21- 25 years (6)
- O 25+ years (7)

**SECTION A. *VIEWS OF THE IMPACT AND VALUE OF EXEMPLARS*** **In responding to the statements below, please tick the circle under the appropriate rating. Do not spend a long time on each statement – your first reaction is probably the best response. PLEASE RESPOND TO EACH STATEMENT.**

---

Q10 The use of exemplars results in greater transparency around assessment

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q11 Using exemplars means students can see what quality work looks like

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

Q12 Exemplars lower student confidence to undertake similar tasks.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q13 Using exemplars improves the quality of students' work.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q14 Exemplars are a useful learning tool for students.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q15 Using exemplars results in students copying the exemplars.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q16 Students are capable of making sound judgments about the quality of a piece of work.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q17 The use of exemplars stifles student creativity.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q18 Using exemplars helps students monitor their own work.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q19 Using exemplars results in students developing understandings about achievement standards.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q20 Exemplars show students what is expected in a piece of work.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q21 Exemplars raise student confidence to undertake similar tasks.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q22 Using exemplars gives students a better understanding of task requirements.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q23 Using exemplars has a positive impact on student achievement.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q24 Using exemplars is an 'extra' that I do not have time for.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q25 Students are not capable of making sound judgments about the quality of peers' work.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q26 Exemplars are a useful teaching tool.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q27 Using exemplars takes valuable time away from teaching course content.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q28 Students are not capable of making sound judgments about the quality of their work.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q29 Students need support to make judgments about the quality of their own work.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

**DO YOU USE EXEMPLARS IN YOUR TEACHING PRACTICE?**

O YES - Please click the next page icon and you will be take to SECTION B (1)

O NO - Either identify why you do not use exemplars in the box below or write "No Comment" in the box below. (Once you have done this, please click the next page icon and you will be directed to the end of the survey. Thank you for your participation). (2) _____

**SECTION B. *USE OF EXEMPLARS* In responding to the statements below, please tick the circle under the appropriate rating . Do not spend a long time on each statement – your first reaction is probably the best response. PLEASE RESPOND TO EACH STATEMENT.**

---

Q1 Exemplars should illustrate a range of achievement.

O Strongly Agree (1)

O Agree (2)

O Neither agree nor disagree (3)

O Disagree (4)

O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q2 The topic of an exemplar should be different from the topic students are to complete.

O Strongly agree (1)

O Agree (2)

O Neither agree nor disagree (3)

O Disagree (4)

O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q3 Grades should be included on exemplars.

O Strongly agree (1)

O Agree (2)

O Neither agree nor disagree (3)

O Disagree (4)

O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q4 Only high quality exemplars should be used.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q5 Exemplars are useful for all students, irrespective of level of study eg: undergraduate, postgraduate.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q6 Teacher-led explanations about the quality of an exemplar is an essential feature of use.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q7The type of task in the exemplar should match the task students are to complete eg: report exemplar - report task.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q8 Exemplars are especially useful when students are unfamiliar with the type of task eg: report.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q9 Students' understandings about quality work are enhanced when they discuss exemplars with others.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q10 The exemplar topic should match the topic students are to address in their work.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q11 Exemplars should not contain markers' comments.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q12 Time should be given in class for students to discuss the quality of exemplars.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Dsagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q13 Posting exemplars on-line is an effective strategy.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q14 Using exemplars is another way of helping students understand course content.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q15 Students need to be able to explain why an exemplar is good or not good.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q16 Exemplars are not useful for post-graduate students.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q17 Discussion about what constitutes quality work is an essential feature of exemplar use.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q18 Exemplars should only be available to students with lecturer supervision, during class time.

- O Strongly agree (1)
- O Agree (2)
- O Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- O Disagree (4)
- O Strongly disagree (5)

**SECTION C: *FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR USE OF EXEMPLARS***

Q1 Why do you use exemplars?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

---

Q2 What or who prompted you to use exemplars?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q3 Please provide a brief outline of how you *typically* go about using exemplars with your students.

_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

Q4 What do you consider the **greatest benefit for you as a teacher** when using exemplars.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q5 What do you consider the greatest challenges for you as a teacher when using exemplars.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q6 What do you consider the greatest challenges for students when using exemplars.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q7 Any other comments about the use of exemplars?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

**YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO DO SO.**

**If you are interested in participating in an interview to talk further about your use of exemplars, please contact Eleanor Hawe at e.hawe@auckland.ac.nz**

## APPENDIX B

Table 1
Frequencies of number of years teaching in higher education and using exemplars.

| | Number of Years | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1-5 | 6-10 | 11-15 | 16-20 | 21-25 | 25+ |
| Teaching in Higher Education | 4 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 3 | 6 |
| Using exemplars in their teaching | 15 | 11 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 5 |

## APPENDIX C

Table 2
Means and standard deviations of individual items of IEUT questionnaire.

| Items | N | M[4] | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| The use of exemplars results in greater transparency around assessment | 44 | 2.11 | 1.017 |
| Using exemplars means students can see what quality work looks like | 44 | 1.66 | .834 |
| Exemplars lower student confidence to undertake similar tasks. | 44 | 3.77 | .859 |
| Using exemplars improves the quality of students' work. | 44 | 2.18 | .995 |
| Exemplars are a useful learning tool for students. | 44 | 1.91 | .936 |
| Using exemplars results in students copying the exemplars. | 44 | 3.50 | 1.171 |
| Students are capable of making sound judgments about the quality of a piece of work. | 44 | 2.43 | .950 |
| The use of exemplars stifles student creativity. | 44 | 3.64 | 1.123 |
| Using exemplars helps students monitor their own work. | 44 | 2.32 | .959 |
| Using exemplars results in students developing understandings about achievement standards. | 44 | 2.09 | .936 |
| Exemplars show students what is expected in a piece of work. | 44 | 1.86 | .979 |
| Exemplars raise student confidence to undertake similar tasks. | 44 | 2.14 | .930 |
| Using exemplars gives students a better understanding of task requirements. | 44 | 1.91 | .936 |
| Using exemplars has a positive impact on student achievement. | 44 | 2.09 | .960 |
| Using exemplars is an 'extra' that I do not have time for. | 44 | 4.18 | .947 |
| Students are not capable of making sound judgments about the quality of peers' work. | 44 | 4.02 | .792 |
| Exemplars are a useful teaching tool. | 44 | 1.98 | .976 |
| Using exemplars takes valuable time away from teaching course content. | 44 | 4.09 | .830 |
| Students are not capable of making sound judgments about the quality of their work. | 44 | 3.77 | .774 |
| Students need support to make judgments about the quality of their own work. | 44 | 2.20 | .904 |
| **Overall Items** | 44 | 2.69 | .810 |

[4] 1 = Strongly Agree and 5 = Strongly Disagree

**APPENDIX D**

Table 3
Means and standard deviations of individual items of BPUE questionnaire.

| Items | N | M[1] | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Exemplars should illustrate a range of achievement. | 38 | 2.50 | 1.007 |
| The topic of an exemplar should be different from the topic students are to complete. | 38 | 3.05 | .837 |
| Grades should be included on exemplars. | 38 | 2.92 | .882 |
| Only high-quality exemplars should be used. | 38 | 3.39 | 1.128 |
| Exemplars are useful for all students, irrespective of level of study eg: undergraduate, postgrad... | 38 | 1.89 | .764 |
| Teacher-led explanations about the quality of an exemplar is an essential feature of use. | 38 | 2.26 | .891 |
| The type of task in the exemplar should match the task students are to complete eg: report exempl... | 38 | 1.82 | .766 |
| Exemplars are especially useful when students are unfamiliar with the type of task eg: report. | 38 | 1.76 | .542 |
| Students' understandings about quality work are enhanced when they discuss exemplars with others. | 38 | 1.82 | .563 |
| The exemplar topic should match the topic students are to address in their work. | 38 | 2.89 | 1.110 |
| Exemplars should not contain markers' comments. | 38 | 3.18 | .982 |
| Time should be given in class for students to discuss the quality of exemplars. | 38 | 2.08 | .784 |
| Posting exemplars on-line is an effective strategy. | 38 | 2.95 | .733 |
| Using exemplars is another way of helping students understand course content. | 38 | 2.11 | .924 |
| Students need to be able to explain why an exemplar is good or not good. | 38 | 1.97 | .592 |
| Exemplars are not useful for post-graduate students. | 38 | 4.42 | .683 |
| Discussion about what constitutes quality work is an essential feature of exemplar use. | 38 | 1.74 | .503 |
| Exemplars should only be available to students with lecturer supervision, during class time. | 38 | 3.03 | 1.262 |
| **Overall Items** | 38 | 2.54 | .537 |

## APPENDIX E

Table 4
Means, standard deviations, and alpha reliabilities of subscales of IEUT and BPUE questionnaires.

| | | *IEUT* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subscales | Means[5] | SD | Cronbach Alpha |
| Benefits | 2.04 | .784 | .958 |
| Drawbacks | 3.83 | .711 | .754 |
| Judgments | 2.12 | .686 | .761 |

| | | *BPUE* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subscales | Means | SD | Cronbach Alpha |
| Selection of exemplars | 2.23 | .411 | .688 |
| Task and Student characteristics | 2.09 | .289 | .608 |

## APPENDIX F

Table 5
More versus less years of teaching: Means and standard deviations for BPUE and IEUT subscales

| | | BPUE | | IEUT | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Selection | Task and Student Characteristics | Benefits | Drawbacks | Judgments |
| Teaching Experience | | | | | | |
| More (16-26+ years) | M[6] | 2.25 | 2.23 | 2.12 | 4.01 | 2.14 |
| | N | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 |
| | SD | .351 | .568 | .858 | .623 | .631 |
| Less (1 – 15 years) | M | 2.21 | 1.94 | 1.69 | 3.96 | 2.10 |
| | N | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 |
| | SD | .472 | .504 | .553 | .611 | .657 |
| Total | M | 2.22 | 2.09 | 1.90 | 3.98 | 2.12 |

[5] 1 = Strongly Agree and 5 = Strongly Disagree

[6] 1 = Strongly Agree and 5 = Strongly Disagree

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 38 | 38 | 38 | 38 | 38 |
| SD | .411 | .549 | .744 | .609 | .636 |

## APPENDIX G

Table 6
More versus less years of using exemplars in their teaching: Means and standard deviations for BPUE and IEUT subscales

| | | BPUE | | IEUT | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Selection | Task and Student Characteristics | Benefits | Drawbacks | Judgments |
| Exemplar Experience | | | | | | |
| More (6-26+ years) | M[7] | 2.28 | 2.21 | 1.66* | 4.01 | 2.22 |
| | N | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 |
| | SD | .451 | .576 | .446 | .557 | .693 |
| Less (1 – 5 years) | M | 2.28 | 2.21 | 2.28* | 3.88 | 2.22 |
| | N | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| | SD | .349 | .498 | .951 | .687 | .544 |
| Total | M | 2.22 | 2.09 | 1.90 | 3.98 | 2.12 |
| | N | 38 | 38 | 38 | 38 | 38 |
| | SD | .411 | .549 | .744 | .609 | .636 |

*p,.01

## APPENDIX H

Table 7
Extent of use of exemplars in courses: Means and standard deviations for BPUE and IEUT subscales

| | | BPUE | | IEUT | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Selection | Task and Student Characteristics | Benefits | Drawbacks | Judgments |
| Extent of Exemplar Use | | | | | | |
| All Courses | M[3] | 2.07** | 1.93 | 1.82 | 4.25* | 2.02 |
| | N | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| | SD | .414 | .595 | .988 | .586 | .671 |
| Some Courses | M | 2.34** | 2.21 | 1.96 | 3.80* | 2.19 |
| | N | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 |
| | SD | .378 | .498 | .519 | .565 | .614 |
| Total | M | 2.22 | 2.09 | 1.90 | 3.98 | 2.12 |
| | N | 38 | 38 | 38 | 38 | 38 |
| | SD | .411 | .549 | .744 | .609 | .636 |

[7] 1 = Strongly Agree and 5 = Strongly Disagree

*p<.04

**p<.02

## Appendix I. Interview Schedule.

*History of exemplar use and why exemplars are used*

When did you first use exemplars with your students / how long have you been using exemplars?

Why did you decide to use exemplars / what motivated you to use exemplars?

What benefits accrue from using exemplars – who benefits and how?

eg: aware of what is required; of what constitutes expected performance; understanding of criteria; 'I can do it' [self-efficacy]; understand academic discourse …

Do you use exemplars in all of your classes – why / not?

*Source of exemplars*

Where do your exemplars come from?

How do you go about getting them?

Are there any issues in sourcing exemplars? If so, what are the issues?

*How exemplars are used*

Talk me through they ways in which exemplars are used in one of your courses – how are they introduced [how do you explain their use to students]; what do you do with them; what do students do with them eg: lecturer led discussion; issue and talk about them in groups; analysis of an exemplar; evaluation using rubrics/ criteria; on line availability; comparing exemplars to works-in-progress ….

What sorts of things do you do to get students to engage with exemplars – is it difficult to get them to engage with them?

How do you know which exemplars to use; why do you use specific exemplars? eg: to show specific points – give examples of when and this has been done.

How many exemplars do you typically use? Why this many … do you show high achievement only; do you show a range of achievement; do you use 'poor exemplars – why/not …

How often do you use exemplars?

Has your use of exemplars changed over time - if so, how and why?

*Challenges and issues encountered*

What are some of the challenges and issues you have encountered when using exemplars - challenges to you as a teacher; challenges for students …

eg; finding appropriate exemplars - of the same task or a similar task; concern about copying and/or stifling creativity; balancing time to analyse and discuss exemplars with coverage of course content; the amount of scaffolding [time] required by students to evaluate exemplars …

Do you think exemplars should be of the same task that the students are working on, or a similar task, and why do you think this?

Some people have mentioned …. as a challenge / issue…what is your reaction to this?

How have you dealt with these challenges / issues?

Do you think exemplars are more suitable for use in some courses than others – if so, which courses and why? [any differences between undergraduate and graduate courses]

*Looking ahead*

Are there things you would like to change or try in the future in terms of using exemplars – what and why? eg: dialogic use; students evaluating exemplars and developing their evaluative expertise, ability to self-monitor ….

If you were to work with a colleague and help them use exemplars in their teaching, what advice and/or assistance would you give?

If interested, the following address the use of exemplars in higher education and are worth reading:

Carless, D. (2015). Promoting student engagement with quality. In D. Carless, *Excellence in university assessment. Learning from award-winning practice*, Chapter 7, pp. 131-149. London: Routledge.

Scoles, J., Huxham, M., & McArthur, J. (2013). No longer exempt from good practice: using exemplars to close the feedback gap for exams. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 38*(6), 631-645.

To, J., & Carless, D. (2015). Making productive use of exemplars: Peer discussion and teacher guidance for positive transfer of strategies. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, DOI: 10.1080/0309877X.2015.1014317

## APPENDIX J Post-Observation Interview Schedule

Areas to discuss and questions will arise from the class teaching observation(s), and as such may vary across participants. The following provides a general framework for the discussion.

*Purpose in using the specific exemplar(s)*

Why this exemplar / these exemplars – what made you select and use this one …..

Why one [two, or three] exemplars?

Where did the exemplars come from?

Had you used them before?

*Use of the exemplar(s)*

You started by ……..

Tell me why you started in this manner.

You then …… What prompted you to do this?

*Prompt:* you asked the students to identify the strengths in the exemplar – why did you do this? What happened as a result of this?

*Prompt:* I noticed that …… What from your perspective was happening here?

*Challenges and issues*

What did you find particularly challenging when using the exemplar(s) during this session?

How did you manage this challenge?

What issues arose and how did you deal with them?

*Prompt:* I noticed …….. Can you tell me a bit more about this from your perspective?

*Reflection*

If you were to change how the use of exemplars played out in this session [for next time] what would you change and why?

## APPENDIX K Guidelines for using exemplars in teaching-learning programmes.

The guidelines below are based on findings from the Ako Aotearoa / Faculty of Education and Social Work project *Why lecturers use exemplars and how they use them*.

Exemplars are ***carefully selected*** samples of ***authentic student work*** from ***previous cohorts*** chosen as they ***illustrate designated levels of quality or competence*** eg: posters, e-portfolios, videoed seminars presentations, disciplinary artefacts such as designs, laboratory reports, musical performances, essays, position papers … These may be the same or *similar* to the current task.

***Prior to use it is important to establish with students WHY exemplars are being used in particular ways and to develop agreed upon protocols regarding use. Students should also be encouraged to use exemplars to monitor and regulate their learning and performance.***

***Exemplars can be used for a range of purposes/reasons: these purposes inform HOW they are used.*** The table below illustrates this link. Note: it is not intended that these uses are carried out as a series of 'steps'.

| **PURPOSE** | **Related sub-purpose:** | **HOW exemplars can be used:**<br>*Note – select exemplars that match / depict the purpose* |
|---|---|---|
| **1. To clarify the nature of the task or assignment** | To show students what the task requires / entails;<br><br>To show students the big picture / where they are going / to provide a goal;<br><br>To give students with a starting point and a pathway;<br><br>To show students different possibilities / ways of realizing the task.<br><br>To familiarize students with the genre of the task, features of academic tasks, level of thinking or performance called for. | ***Provide students with access to one, two or three reasonably high quality exemplars in their entirety,***<br>- drawing attention to ways in which they meet / illustrate task requirements;<br>- highlighting the exemplar as a long-term goal;<br>- discussing / identifying short terms goals when working towards this long term goal;<br>- identifying a starting point to the task (for some tasks there may be one starting point and a clear pathway, for other tasks there may be several possible starting points and pathways);<br>- illustrating different ways in which the task can be realized / different ways in which (high) achievement can be realized.<br><br>***Using extracts from carefully selected exemplars that illustrate the 'teaching' point*** eg: components of a report, features of a position paper, how to present a seminar, aspects of a performance or artefact; how to analyse rather than describe … |
| **To help students understand the nature of quality work ie: develop their evaluative knowledge and expertise**<br><br>**and their productive knowledge and expertise.** | To show what quality work looks like [as a whole and/or how specific criteria / aspects work together to comprise quality];<br><br>To familiarize students with the evaluation criteria / rubric for the task;<br><br>To show students what constitutes different levels of achievement;<br><br>To help students make robust, defensible judgments about the quality of a piece of work / performance;<br><br>To help students identify what needs improvement in a piece of work / performance and how it can be improved;<br><br>To make it clear to students what the lecturer / marking team look for in a piece of work / performance. | ***Using a reasonably high quality exemplar in its entirety AND/OR extracts from carefully selected exemplars that illustrate aspects of quality***. Students may be provided with these prior to class (with a related task to complete prior to class) or during class.<br><br>Students (in groups) analyse exemplar / extracts, identifying, discussing and debating what it is that constitutes quality, identifying evidence to support judgments;<br>OR students (in groups) analyse exemplar / extracts with reference to criteria / rubric, identifying, discussing and debating what it is that constitutes quality, identifying evidence to support judgments.<br><br>In groups or as a class students deconstruct criteria / rubrics – lecturer facilitation / guidance [this may initially be without reference to exemplar / extracts and/or with reference to these].<br><br>***Using an exemplar [select exemplar and/or extracts with specific areas for improvement]*** with students (in groups) identifying areas for improvement, discussing how these improvements can be made. Students may be asked to generate feedback for the author of the exemplars and/or make the improvements.<br><br>***Students bring own works-in-progress to class for peer review and feedback, and comparison with selected exemplars.***<br><br>Lecturer uses extracts / exemplar on doc camera or displays it in some other way, '*marking out loud*' and explaining reasons for decisions. Students ask questions during the process. This may or may not be with reference to criteria / rubrics. |
| **To motivate and build students' self-efficacy** | To motivate students to achieve;<br><br>To engender in students an 'I can do it' mindset ie: build self-efficacy;<br><br>To reduce levels of anxiety / reassure students;<br><br>To provide a level of achievement (excellence) for students to aspire to. | ***When selecting exemplars it is important to consider the impact they may have on students.***<br>***Consideration needs to be given to whether (and why) to use an exemplar in its entirety or to use extracts;***<br>***and whether to select top quality 'A' pieces of work, reasonably high quality pieces of work, exemplars from the mid or lower ranges of achievement, or three to four showing the spectrum of achievement.***<br>***Selection MUST reflect purpose(s) for use.***<br><br>In some cases selecting a top 'A' may cause anxiety and/or dishearten individuals; in other cases a top 'A' may serve as an incentive.<br>***Discuss reasons for selecting specific exemplars with students.*** |