ASSESSING AND GIVING FEEDBACK ON STUDENTS' WRITTEN WORK: AN EXPERT-NOVICE STUDY USING VERBAL PROTOCOL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine and gain insight on how the practice of the expert raters in assessing and giving feedback on students' writing can be translated into a mental model that can be used in training to help the novice raters acquire the skill of an expert rater in assessing ESL students' writing effectively. The study was carried out in two phases. In phase one, the study contributes to the body of knowledge by uncovering the cognitive difference between the expert and novice raters while assessing and giving feedback on students' writing. The transcripts of verbal protocol Analysis (VPA) and interviews were analysed, using a coding scheme, to identify the knowledge states and conceptual operators used by the expert and novice raters, which were also their personal justification on the decision and action taken while doing the process of "thinking aloud". The findings in phase one of the study helped the researcher in understanding how an expert rater could be differentiated from the novice rater in terms of their mental cognitive processes. The lines of reasoning embedded in the expert raters' responses to students' writing were drawn from this analysis and translated into a conceptual mental model. Apart from getting a better understanding of the constructs in the mental model, phase two of the study also focused on the feasibility of using this mental model in a training/workshop to reduce the differences between the expert raters and novice raters in terms of skills in assessing and evaluating writing. Five participants out of twenty five novice raters who came for the workshop were interviewed in a preliminary probe into the usefulness of the mental model in training to help novice rater acquire the skills of an expert rater in assessing writing.

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ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan mengkaji dan mendapatkan kefahaman tentang bagaimana amalan pentaksir pakar dalam mentaksir penulisan pelajar dapat diterjermahkan kepada model minda yang dapat digunakan dalam latihan untuk menolong pentaksir novis memperolehi kemahiran pentaksir pakar dalam mentaksir penulisan pelajar secara berkesan. Kajian ini telah dilaksanakan dalam dua fasa. Dalam fasa pertama, kajian menyumbang kepada badan ilmu dengan mendedahkan perbezaan kognitif diantara pentaksir pakar dengan pentaksir novis semasa dan memberi maklumbalas kepada penulisan pelajar. Transkrip analisis protokol lisan (VPA) dan temubual telah dianalisiskan, menggunakan skema koding, untuk mengenalpasti pengetahuan kerja (knowledge states) dan operator konseptual yang digunakan oleh pentaksir pakar dan pentaksir novis, yang juga adalah justifikasi peribadi mereka terhadap keputusan dan tindakan yang diambil semasa proses 'thinking aloud'. Dapatan dari fasa satu telah membantu pengkaji memahami bagaimana pakar pentaksir dapat dibezakan dari pentaksir amatur dari segi proses kognitif minda. Garis (panduan) membuat keputusan ('lines of reasoning') yang tersirat dalam respon pakar pentaksir kepada penulisan pelajar telah diperolehi dari analisis ini dan diterjemahkan kepada model minda konseptual. Selain dari memahami konstruk yang terkandung dalam model minda, fasa kedua kajian ini menfokuskan kepada kebolehgunaan model minda ini dalam latihan untuk merapatkan jurang berbezaan antara pentaksir pakar dengan pentaksir amatur dari segi kemahiran mentaksir dan menilai penulisan. Lima orang peserta daripada dua puluh lima orang peserta kursus telah ditemubual penerokaan awal terhadap keberkesanan model minda dalam latihan untuk membantu pentaksir novis memperolehi kemahiran mentaksir dan menilai seperti seorang pentaksir pakar.

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

CPs	Course participants
CTA	Cognitive task analysis
EA	Error analysis
ELT	English Language teaching
EPRD	Educational Planning and Research Department
ER	Expert rater
ESL	English as a second language
ETeMS	English in the teaching of mathematics and science
HSC	High School Certificate
LoR	Line of reasoning
L1	First language
L2	Second language
MOEM	Ministry of Education Malaysia
MTDP	Malaysian Trainer Development Programme
NR	Novice rater
SMK	'Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan' or National Secondary School
SPM	'Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysia' or Malaysian Certificate of Education
STPM	Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia
Tr	Trainer
TL	Teaching and learning
UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate
VP	Verbal protocol
VPA	Verbal protocol analysis