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Why and how educators use exemplars

Eleanor Hawe
University of Auckland, New Zealand, e.hawe@auckland.ac.nz

Helen Dixon
University of Auckland, New Zealand, h.dixon@auckland.ac.nz

Richard Hamilton
University of Auckland, New Zealand, rj.hamilton@auckland.ac.nz

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Introduction

A valued goal of higher education is the development of students' ability to regulate their learning and performance as they engage in their studies (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Panadero & Broadbent, 2018). In educational contexts, self-regulation refers to the process by which students activate and sustain cognitions, affects and behaviours that they regularly orient toward the achievement of learning goals (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2008). In short, self-regulating students take ownership over and direct their learning so they can achieve long and short-term goals. Within higher education, the ability to regulate one's thinking, emotions and behavior is not only linked to higher levels of academic achievement (Richardson Abraham & Bond, 2012) and retention (Zepke & Leach, 2010), it is considered critical in terms of preparing students for the demands of upper-level courses and life beyond academia (Panadero & Broadbent, 2018).

In recent years it has been argued that the foundational skills, strategies and dispositions associated with self-regulation, in particular judgment-making and self-monitoring, can be developed through the planned and purposeful integration of exemplars into higher education programmes (Ajjawi, Tai, Dawson & Boud, 2018; Carless, 2015). This argument has been supported by an emerging field of scholarship that has examined ways in which exemplars have been used to develop and further aspects of student self-regulation (see for example Carless & Chan, 2016; Hawe, Lightfoot & Dixon, 2019). This paper begins with a brief overview of the theoretical point of reference for the current study, Zimmerman's model of self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2000; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009) followed by an account of key findings from exemplar related research carried out in the context of higher education.

Self-regulation

Zimmerman's (2000) cyclical representation of self-regulation is comprised of three inter-related and recursive phases: Forethought, Performance Control and Self-reflection. The Forethought phase incorporates two components, Task Analysis and Self-motivational beliefs. Task Analysis involves formulating an impression of what a completed task 'looks like', establishing long and short-term goals and choosing strategies that enable realization of these goals. In an academic setting, this component also addresses familiarization with the criteria and standards that will be used to determine levels of achievement (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2014). Alongside task analysis, students consider their motivational beliefs and affective states (Winne & Hadwin, 2010). Of particular importance is how individuals perceive their capability to perform the set task ie: self-efficacy. When students believe themselves capable of accomplishing a task they are motivated to succeed and persist in the face of difficulties; when students believe they are unable to accomplish a task, their motivation decreases and as a consequence they exert minimal effort. The second phase, Performance Control, encompasses Self-observation and Self-control. At the heart of Self-observation lies self-monitoring (Zimmerman, 2000), a process whereby students generate internal feedback about progress towards their goal(s) and make adjustments to their thinking, emotions and actions (Butler & Winne, 1995). More specifically, academic self-monitoring "refers to students' efforts to observe themselves as they evaluate information about specific personal processes or actions that affect their learning and achievement" (Zimmerman & Paulsen, 1995, p. 14). The second component, Self-control, incorporates a range of meta-cognitive and motivational processes that students draw upon to maintain interest and effort, seeking help / feedback from a teacher or peer, restructuring the work environment, engaging in self-talk and using incentives to increase effort (Zimmerman, 2000). The third and final phase, Self-reflection, involves self-judgment and self-reaction (Zimmerman, 2000). Students evaluate the completed task or performance with reference to their goals, the assessment criteria and desired standard of achievement, drawing

inferences about and constructing explanations (attributions) for successes and failures. These in turn trigger cognitive and emotional reactions that influence motivation in relation to future work on similar tasks. Zimmerman's framework thus highlights crucial features of learning and as a corollary, educators need to maximize the teaching-learning environment in ways that promote and foster the development of these features (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2014; Panadero, 2017). Exemplars have the potential to contribute towards achievement of this aim (Ajjawi et al., 2018; Carless, 2015).

Exemplars

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). Since the turn of the century, a growing number of small-scale studies has been carried out in a range of disciplines investigating the use of exemplars as part of student course work. A synthesis of this research (see Carless, 2015) shows a majority of these studies has focused on the student experience with the latter reporting a number of benefits accruing from their use. With reference to these studies, exemplars have purportedly helped students 'see' what educators expect in a task (Bell, Mladenovic & Price, 2013), enabling them to gain a sense of the final product as a whole and an appreciation of specifics that comprise the whole (Hendry, Armstrong & Bromberger, 2012; Hendry, White & Herbert, 2016). More specifically, working with exemplars has assisted students to become acquainted with the nature and structure of specific types of academic tasks such as reports, essays and case studies, and familiarized them with the type of language and academic conventions required in these tasks (Hawe, Lightfoot & Dixon, 2019; Wimhurst & Manning, 2013). In addition, when a range of good quality exemplars has been used, students have reported gaining insights into the different ways in which a particular task can be accomplished (Hawe et al., 2019; Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2002). Students have also explained how through close engagement with these tools they have gained understandings about what counts as quality in relation to course work, with some reporting that they have found exemplars more useful and of greater value than rubrics and lists of criteria in supporting assignment related learning and performance (Bell et al., 2013; Hendry, Bromberger & Armstrong, 2011; Hendry et al., 2012; To & Carless, 2016). Furthermore, students have commented on how their confidence levels have been boosted and anxiety levels reduced as a result of their work with exemplars (Hawe et al., 2019; Hendry et al., 2012; Hendry, White & Herbert, 2016). It appears therefore that through their work with exemplars, students gain knowledge and skills that enable them to successfully undertake and complete specific tasks.

The reported benefits accruing from the use of exemplars have however been tempered by concerns about how exposure to the work of others may discourage creative and novel approaches to the task at hand, result in plagiarism, and lead to superficial learning (Carless, Chan, To & Barrett, 2018; Handley & Williams, 2011). Reservations such as these can be moderated through specific strategies including use of a range of exemplars that illustrate different approaches to the task and having conversations with students about academic integrity. Such conversations address reasons for using exemplars and protocols associated with use (Carless et al., 2018; Hawe et al., 2019). Unproductive copying can also be averted through judicious timing in terms of their use, for instance using exemplars once students have begun the act of production. It is argued that students are less inclined to plagiarize under such circumstances as they have developed a sense of ownership and commitment towards their work prior to seeing the exemplars (Carless et al., 2018; Hawe & Dixon, 2017) enabling the latter to be used as a point of comparison with a view to identifying areas for development and making said improvements to one's work.

While the voices of students have been to the fore, the voices of educators have been largely missing from the exemplar research literature with little if any attention paid to determining *why* the latter choose to use these tools: educators' reasons for using exemplars have to a large extent been taken-for-granted. Instead, the focus has been on ways in which individual educators have used exemplars in specific contexts (see for example Hawe et al., 2019; Smyth & Carless, 2020; To & Carless, 2015; To & Liu, 2017). To date few if any studies have intentionally explored from the perspective of educators, their reasons for using exemplars and how they go about using these tools to achieve said purposes. What we know about the ways in which educators use exemplars has come from the aforementioned studies where the spotlight has been on ways in which individual educators manage the use of exemplars and from contextual details in student-focused studies. Collectively these studies have indicated exemplars are used in the main, in the following ways:

- in-class analysis by students of annotated exemplars with grade descriptors accompanied by opportunities to ask questions (Bell et al., 2013);
- marking of exemplars during class sessions by students followed by group discussion and teacher-led explanations about the rationale for awarding specific grades (Rust, Price & O'Donovan, 2003; Hendry et al., 2012);
- co-constructing evaluation criteria with students followed by appraisal and discussion of selected exemplars (Orsmond et al., 2002; To & Carless, 2016);
- analysis and marking of exemplars by students prior to class, pair-sharing of analyses in class, followed by group presentations outlining areas for improvement (Carless & Chan, 2016; Hendry & Anderson, 2013).

Integral to these activities has been discussion and dialogue (Carless & Chan, 2016; Hendry et al., 2012), with Carless (2015) observing, "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). The research literature has indicated the productive use of exemplars includes a combination of "student generation, or analysis, of criteria; peer discussion of exemplars; teacher-led eliciting of student views with related commentary; [and] discussion of how the exemplars could be improved" (Carless, 2015, pp. 147-8). However, the underlying purpose(s) of or for these activities has remained largely unexplored.

Research Aim and Questions

As noted above, while educators use exemplars, little is known about their reasons for using them and how they use them with reference to these reasons. The current study addresses this gap by canvassing in a Faculty of Education and Social Work, educators' views about why and how they use exemplars. The study makes a contribution to the field by drawing on the voices of educators experienced in their use to answer two questions: why do educators use exemplars and how do they use them? Prior to commencing the study, ethical approval was gained from the university's Human Participant Ethics Committee (Ref No 017095).

Method

The project was comprised of three phases: (1) Creation, trialing and administration of a survey [insert footnote 1 here]; (2) Individual semi-structured interviews; (3) Classroom observations, collection of artefacts and follow-up interviews. This paper draws on qualitative data from Phase 1 and 2 participants who indicated exemplars were integral to their pedagogy.

Recruitment and Data Gathering Tools

For Phase 1, 44 educators (38% of faculty) completed an anonymous Likert-scale survey with 38 indicating they used exemplars as part of their teaching practice. This survey included seven open ended prompts as follows: Why do you use exemplars; What or who prompted you to use exemplars; Please provide a brief outline of how you *typically* go about using exemplars with your students; What do you consider the greatest benefit for you as a teacher when using exemplars; What do you consider the greatest challenges for you as a teacher when using exemplars; What do you consider the greatest challenges for students when using exemplars; Any other comments about the use of exemplars (see Hawe, Dixon & Hamilton, 2018). For Phase 2, 14 educators volunteered to complete an individual semi-structured interview of between 45 and 60 minutes with one the authors. Six of these volunteers were recruited via the Likert scale survey. The remainder were invited to participate after a reading of course outlines published on the staff intranet indicated that exemplars were central to the pedagogy of those teaching on the course. The semi-structured interviews addressed the following broad areas: History of exemplar use and why exemplars are used; Source of exemplars; How exemplars are used; Challenges and issues encountered; Looking ahead [changes to use and why] (see Hawe, Dixon & Hamilton, 2018). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed with pseudonyms assigned to all interviewees. Exemplar use was neither new to nor unusual for these educators with just over a third indicating they had been using exemplars in their undergraduate and postgraduate courses for between 1-5 years, just under a third for between 6-10 years and a third for more than ten years.

Data Analysis

Open-ended responses from the Likert-scale survey and interview data were analysed using codes assigned in a manner consistent with the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). While several open codes were applied in a deductive manner using criteria derived from cognate literature eg: ‘Knowing what is expected’; ‘Quality work’; the majority were induced from the data eg: ‘Big picture’; ‘Source of comfort’; ‘Extracts’; ‘Improvement’. The 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 four themes reflecting reasons for use (see below). Two of the authors carried out these analyses, initially coding the same data sets to establish reliability in terms of understanding and interpretation of the data, then later coding samples of randomly selected data and data identified as ‘puzzling’. Taken together, these approaches generated an on-going and iterative dialogue between data and theory, resulting in a robust process of analysis.

Findings

Educators had three main reasons for using exemplars: to clarify, and help students understand, task requirements; to help students recognize the nature of quality work; to motivate and build students’ self-efficacy. A fourth implicit purpose was to promote reflection on works-in-progress. To facilitate the realization of these purposes, educators used exemplars in particular ways. Although there were similarities between educators in their usage of these tools, some nuanced differences were noted.

To Clarify, and Help Students Understand, Task Requirements

All of the Phase 1 and 2 participants who indicated exemplars were integral to their pedagogy indicated that exemplars were a valuable tool for clarifying and helping students understand task related expectations and requirements. Although students have access to written outlines of

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) [insert footnote 2 here]. Exemplars thus provided 'something concrete to actually help [students] conceptualize [the task]' (Jenny, Int, p.5) [insert footnote 3 here] 'that [are] a bit more memorable than words' (Nita, Int, p.17). Helping students understand the nature of the task and what they need to do was considered central to successful achievement:

> [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).

A key consideration when using exemplars to familiarise students with a task, was whether to use the entire exemplar or short extracts. Because Harry wanted to 'show them the big picture first' (Int, p.16), he initially gave his students the full exemplar (on-line or in class). This gave students 'a target ... a clear goal … a sense of the big picture and where they are going' (Henry, Int, p.2). Exemplars were particularly useful for many of Henry's students as 'it's the first time they have done something like this [a critical reflection] so they need to see what the end product might look like' (Int, p.5). Kim also made reference to how using the full exemplar enabled students to see 'how to start the [task] … how the [task] unfolds … [the] pathway' (Int, p.2). Use of the whole was however the exception rather than the rule, with most educators using extracts as these were more time efficient and they made the task appear 'more manageable [so it would not] overwhelm them as much or be intimidating' (Int, p.10).

The viewing of exemplars was accompanied by purposeful activities, which enabled students to engage more deeply with the work. In some cases, particularly where class sizes were large, this activity took the form of an educator commenting to the class on the piece of work using a 'power-point presentation' (Tina, Int, p.6). As extracts were displayed educators would 'pick out certain things that I want them to particularly take notice of' (Brittany, Int, p. 6). Educators used exemplars so students could become acquainted with particular features of a genre:

> So looking at an essay format, what would make a good introduction, what would make a good discussion… (Brittany, Int, p.2);

identify aspects of academic writing;

> Help[ing] them to better conceptualize how to … integrate literature … (Jenny, Int, p.4);

and/or consider 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 … (Nadia, Int, p.2).

During and/or following these presentations students would be 'given the opportunity to ask questions' (Tina, Int, p.6). In small classes educators distributed hard copies of the extracts for students to read and engage in a 'general discussion' (Gemma, Int, p.4) in groups or as a class, about specific features of the work. Here educators would 'circulate and listen' (Kathryn, Int, p.11) with Hope describing her role as 'the facilitator of discussion' (Int, p. 7) and Tessa emphasising the importance of questioning students to draw attention to 'the way in which person X or Y had done something' (Int, p.10).

While educators expressed concerns about students copying exemplars, they indicated they had strategies to counter this temptation. Some for example only used exemplars during class sessions, instituting a system of peer 'checking' to ensure photos and/or copies were not taken and that all copies were collected after use. Others deliberately constructed tasks that were personalized experiential accounts or individual projects, explaining that these were more difficult for students to 'copy'. To further discourage students from seeing exemplars as recipes to be followed, educators used more than a single extract or piece of work as this enabled and encouraged students to see 'possibilities' (Henry, Int, p.10), opening up 'different ways of conceptualizing, generating and presenting ideas' (Survey # 43) and showing them 'how the task can be done in a variety of different ways' (Survey # 18).

To Help Students Recognize the Nature of Quality Work

The second reason educators put forward for using exemplars was to 'demonstrate what quality looks like' (Survey # 1). Broadly speaking, over ninety percent of the participants talked about using exemplars to illustrate and 'bring to life' the criteria in published rubrics:

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

Exemplars assisted 'students in having an idea of what constitutes high/middle or low-quality work' (Survey # 28) and helped 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). According to Braden 'excellence is something that you have to learn' (Int, p. 3) and to do so students must be engaged in an analysis and critique of exemplars.

As a first step, educators drew students' attention to the marking criteria /rubric that they use when evaluating work so they would '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). Class time was spent 'unpack[ing] the criteria in a verbal way' (Jenny, Int, p. 3) so that everybody was 'on the same page' (Hope, Int, p. 16). The typical approach was to organise students into pairs or small groups to discuss statements on the rubric. Students were then given exemplar extracts that illustrated different levels of achievement, 'searching for evidence [in the exemplars] re the degree to which assessment criteria had been met/not met' (Survey # 18), 'decid[ing] what is an A, B, and C' (Kim, Int, p. 15). Group work was typically drawn to a close by a class discussion where students shared justifications for their judgments. Exemplars thus functioned as tools that enabled the educator and his/her class to 'unpack the criteria, to actually have a better conversation, more effective conversations around the criteria' (Jenny, Int, p.1). A small number of educators extended this activity by asking students to 'identify possible areas for improvement' (Survey # 21). To this end Jenny deliberately chose to 'use exemplars that are not that good so they [students] can actually critique them and look how they can improve them' (Jenny, Int, p. 1). Tessa also selected lower quality work as it 'heightens students' awareness' (Int p. 8) of what might be improved and in doing so contributed to their overall understanding of quality work.

A key factor influencing educators' decisions around the use of single versus multiple exemplars, extracts versus full exemplars and whether to involve students in hands-on dialogic activities with these tools was related to time. A number spoke of a tension between coverage of course content and the integration of exemplars into class activities. This tension was dealt with in different ways, both between educators and by single educators, across different courses. Henry for instance integrated a series of short, sharp and focused dialogic based exemplar activities into several class

sessions in all of his courses, often revisiting pieces of work for different purposes. Nadia on the other hand spoke about how her use differed from course to course. With her graduate course/class '[I] have got the time constraint [of covering a lot of content in a short period of time] so over the years I have worked out ways of getting maximum useful input with the minimum use of time' (Int, p.1). In this course she used extracts from high quality exemplars in a largely teacher-driven explanation of around 30-40 minutes in a single session to familiarize students with the task, indicate what counted as quality work, and to show how she applied the marking criteria to a piece of work. In her undergraduate courses she felt she was under less pressure to cover a large amount of content so 'wouldn't do it at that pace' (Nadia, Int, p.2). Instead, students worked with extracts and full exemplars, over two to three sessions, engaging in the dialogic analysis and evaluation of these with reference to criteria.

To Motivate and Build Students' Self-efficacy

The third reason informing educators' use of exemplars, mentioned explicitly by at least eighty percent of participants, was related to the ways in which they motivated students and 'encourage[d] [them] that … it's achievable', (Kim, Int, p.2). Exemplars engendered a 'can do, I can do this' [attitude]…' (Nadia, Int, p.5), thus helping to 'build up some self-efficacy' (Nita, Int, p.8). In addition, survey respondent 3 commented on how exemplars could 'lower anxiety levels' and Donna talked about using exemplars because students find them 'comforting' (Int, p.3). Tessa also used this term, linking a 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 …. (Int, p.3).

A number explained how they rejected high 'A' exemplars in favour of work that fell into the mid to low 'A' or 'B+' range. For Kim showing 'too high a standard would really crush confidence' (Int, p.11) while Donna thought such work could 'scare them off' (Int, p.12) and Tessa indicated students may consider a high 'A' to be 'completely unobtainable' (Int, p. 15). Educators clearly saw the level or quality of the exemplar as having an impact on students' confidence and motivation, so careful consideration was given to these factors when making decisions about which exemplars to use with reference to the students in the class.

To Promote Reflection on Works-in-progress

A fourth largely implicit reason for using exemplars apparent in a majority of responses in the survey and/or during interviews, was the anticipated impact they would have on students' own work. Hope was however the only educator who referred explicitly to this purpose during her interview, when she talked about using exemplars to help students reflect on their works-in-progress. As part of her class sessions, she built in time for students 'to bring their work [in progress]' (Int, p.11) and compare this to a selection of exemplars. Students then reflected on the quality of their work. This activity was however contingent on students having begun work on their task and bringing a reasonable draft to class for comparison – a predicament acknowledged by Hope. As a result of this comparison Hope expected her students to 'rework the piece' (Int, p.11) in their own time. While other educators did not directly mention this purpose, it was implicit in the discourse:

> 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).

It appeared educators expected their students would apply the knowledge and skills they had acquired through the aforementioned exemplar related activities to their own work, during production.

Discussion

Given the argument that the overarching goal of exemplar use is to enable students to gain the evaluative and productive knowledge, skills and strategies that comprise self-regulation (Ajjawi et al., 2018; Carless, 2015), findings from the current study are now discussed with reference to Zimmerman's (2000) model of self-regulation. Educators used exemplars for the purpose of clarifying and helping students understand task requirements is directly reflected in the Task Analysis component of Zimmerman's Forethought phase. Their emphasis on this purpose is not unexpected, given that successful achievement in academic settings is dependent on compliance with the requirements of assessment tasks (Sadler, 2010; 2014). Despite the issuing of detailed specifications, students' work often fails to comply with what is required (Sadler, 2014). In some instances, as indicated by participants in this study, the way in which a task is written is unclear and/or ambiguous; in other instances, task specifications lack detail and/or students are unfamiliar with the genre or class of response that is called for. 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 available to students. Exemplars "convey messages that nothing else can" (Sadler, 2002, p.136) and as such are well suited to helping students understand task requirements.

Central to Task Analysis, and fundamental to effective self-regulation, is the development of students' goal knowledge (Sadler, 2014). A small number of educators talked about providing students with this knowledge through the use of exemplars in their entirety. They contended that when used in this manner, exemplars give students a picture of the completed task as a whole with some highlighting how this helps students identify where and how to start the task and possible pathways forward. Students need to understand 'where they are going' so they can deliberately and thoughtfully shape their response to a task (Sadler, 2014). Goal knowledge is not only essential to successful task interpretation, it serves as the point of reference and is a necessary condition for feedback and self-monitoring (Butler & Winne, 1995), key components of the Performance Control phase. If students are not aware of or misunderstand the goal or end point 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). As the use of exemplars in their entirety for the purpose of illustrating the end point was the exception rather than the rule in the current study, educators may not be giving students opportunities to gain a sense of the magnitude of the task. The latter is an important dimension of self-efficacy: without a complete picture of the task at hand, students have insufficient information on which to judge their capabilities (Dixon, Hawe & Hamilton, 2020). A number of educators may therefore have missed an opportunity to overtly address a foundational component of self-regulation – goal knowledge.

Associated with goal knowledge is the development of students' understanding regarding the assessment criteria and levels of achievement that are to be used when evaluating their work (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2014). If students are to take responsibility for their learning it is essential that they acquire an understanding of quality, and the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed and defensible evaluative judgments of their productive efforts (Sadler, 1987; 2010). Educators in the present study talked about fostering understandings of quality through a recursive, dialogic process whereby students used statements of criteria and standards (rubrics) alongside exemplar extracts to a) unpack and develop an understanding of these statements and b)

apply this understanding when analyzing and appraising the extracts. The latter iteratively informs and furthers students' shared understandings of rubric statements and the nature of quality work. Moreover, the scaffolded analysis and evaluation of exemplars is recognized as one of the key means by which students' evaluative knowledge and skills can be fostered (Carless et al., 2018; Sadler, 2010; Ajjawi et. al., 2018).

When making decisions about why and how to use exemplars, the use of extracts, unless carefully managed, can however undermine the development of students' goal knowledge and their understanding of quality. A piece of work is more than the sum of its constituent parts. Breaking down the whole into individual components such as an introduction, a specific section 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). As such it has the potential to limit the ability of students to see and talk about the ways in which these parts 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). This situation is exacerbated when rubrics are used to make criterion-by-criterion judgments. The latter practice rests on the assumption criteria do not necessarily overlap or work together, rather they operate as separate and discrete entities. If students become preoccupied with individual components, they lose sight of the 'big picture' and this can result in a fragmented approach to the task. As a consequence, there is a danger that students may not have the opportunity to acquire a holistic, and integrative view of both the task and the nature of quality work.

The third rationale for using exemplars was to motivate students and strengthen their self-efficacy beliefs. This purpose is linked directly to the second component of the Forethought phase, Self-motivational beliefs (Zimmerman, 2000). While the vicarious experience of seeing work produced by members of previous cohorts can give students confidence in their abilities and develop a belief that they too can achieve comparable outcomes (Dixon et al., 2020), this is a double-edged sword. Some studies have reported an increase in students' self-efficacy and confidence as a result of exemplar use (Hawe & Dixon, 2017; Hendry et. al., 2012); others have conveyed how for some students, exposure to exemplars can increase anxiety and contribute to a loss of confidence (Hendry et. al., 2016). Educators highlighted this dilemma when discussing which exemplars to use in terms of levels of achievement. While some students find the use of high quality (A+) exemplars inspiring, for others these can undermine confidence and lead to frustration. To lessen the possible negative impact of exemplars on student motivation and self-efficacy, most educators deliberately drew on work from a range of achievement levels, a practice recommended in the literature (Dixon et al., 2020).

The final motive for using exemplars, promoting student reflection on works-in-progress, is synonymous with student self-monitoring. This process lies at the heart of the Performance Control phase of self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2000). Here students consider the state and quality of their own works-in-progress, generating feedback with reference to goals, criteria and/or standards of achievement and as a result make adjustments and improvements as necessary. There appeared to be a tacit assumption among educators that once students had acquired evaluative knowledge and skills from working with exemplars, they would consequentially and inevitably apply these to their own productive attempts, in their own time. This finding is not unusual given a recent systematic review of research regarding teachers' promotion and use of self-regulated learning noted a failure by educators to explicitly acknowledge and foster student self-regulation as a goal of teaching (Lawson, Vosniadou, Van Deur, Wyra, & Jeffries 2018). Reasons offered for this oversight included teachers' focus on teaching content without similar attention to learning processes (see also Panadero, 2017), a belief that self-regulation is acquired implicitly through experience and the

notion that responsibility for developing self-regulation lies with the student, not the teacher (Lawson et. al., 2018).

How educators can best facilitate the "transfer or adaptation of insights from exemplars to students' own work is … [however] a critical issue" (To & Carless, 2016, p.749). Failing to convey to students that as a result of their exemplar related experiences and activities they are expected to apply the evaluative knowledge and skills gained to their own work, and/or leaving it to chance, may unintentionally undermine all that has gone before. Although a small number of educators in the current study addressed the application of evaluative knowledge and skill to pieces of work, it seemed they only 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 referred to by one of the participants and highlighted in recent literature (see for example Carless et. al., 2018; Hawe & Dixon, 2017) is to bring one's works-in-progress to class to compare to exemplars. In the light of this comparison students can then monitor and make adjustments to their own thinking and/or performance. They may also seek feedback about their work from peers (see Hawe & Dixon, 2017; Carless et al., 2018). In addition, To and Carless (2016) have signaled the importance of in-class discussion (among peers and with the teacher) and teacher mediation/scaffolding through for example feedback on effective strategies, as means of facilitating the positive transfer of strategies to one's own productive attempts. It has been shown that when strategies such as these are built into class sessions in an interactive and dialogic manner, they have the potential to catalyze students' task related self-monitoring and self-regulation (Hawe & Dixon, 2017). Furthermore, if exemplars are to promote and further student self-regulation beyond the task at hand, students need to be made aware of how their evaluative and productive knowledge and skills can applied to future tasks and situations.

Conclusion

The planned and purposeful integration of exemplars into teaching-learning programmes has the potential to enable students to gain the evaluative and productive knowledge, skills and strategies that comprise self-regulation (Ajjawi et al., 2018; Carless; 2015). Although the purposes and approaches identified by participants in the current study were aligned with individual components of Zimmerman's (2000) model of self-regulation, development of the latter was not overtly forthcoming as a rationale for using exemplars. Moreover, the inter-related nature of these components was not addressed – educators treated the components as separate activities rather than interdependent parts of a whole. These oversights may be a function of educators' understanding of self-regulation. Alternatively, they may be due to educators' single-minded focus on using exemplars to support students' understanding of task/assignment requirements and notions of quality in relation to the specific task/assignment. It appeared that the educators emphasized this short-term performance goal at the expense of explicitly addressing the broader, long-term learning goal, development of student self-regulation. Arguably, while the overt promotion of self-regulation as the overarching aim of exemplar use is a key area for improved practice in teaching and as a corollary, improved achievement (Lawson et. al., 2018; Panadero, 2013), it is acknowledged that the latter can be developed implicitly as students gain first-hand experience in the use of exemplars. If, however, the full potential of these tools in developing the capacity of students to monitor and regulate their thinking, actions and emotions is to be realized, educators need to recognize and overtly promote self-regulation as the primary and overarching rationale for exemplar use. This does not preclude addressing task specific matters: rather the long term and more immediate purposes of exemplar use should work together in a complementary fashion with the latter supporting and leading to the former. The development of students as independent, self-regulating

learners is a valued goal of Higher Education and as such students need to be informed of this and to have opportunities to develop the full range of attendant knowledge and skills as they engage in their studies (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Panadero & Broadbent, 2018). This goal can be addressed through an informed use of exemplars in teaching-learning programmes, where they are used deliberately and overtly to foster the ability of students to monitor their current and future work during production and deploy strategies to narrow the gap between present and expected/desired levels of proficiency.

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