Do the self-evaluation skills of economics undergraduates improve as they progress from the first to the second year of their degree programme?

Jon Guest and Robert Riegler

The Importance of Self-Evaluation Skills

- Importance of developing independent learning skills – enable students to take greater control of their own learning
- A necessary condition is that students acquire good self-evaluation skills
  - Sadler (1989)
- Do feedback and grades from assignments improve these self-evaluation skills?

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  - Process vs. outcome
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- Data collected from two pieces of coursework
  - First and second year microeconomics essay
- “What do you honestly consider would be a fair and appropriate mark for the essay you have handed in?”
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- Do the estimates reflect their true beliefs of the quality of their work?
  - Difficult/test or exam vs essay/incentive
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- 81% male students
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Does accuracy improve over time?

Analysis of the Δ inaccuracy.

Model 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(1) Grade Inacc.</th>
<th>(2) Grade Inacc.</th>
<th>(3) Grade Inacc.</th>
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<td>Dep. Var.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutor Grade</td>
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<td>Maths A Levels</td>
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Legend: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Model 2

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<td>R²</td>
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</table>

Legend: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

New Lecturers Workshop, Bristol, Oct 16/17 2009
Conclusions

- The accuracy of the self-evaluation estimates did improve.
- Two important factors appear to be
  - Inaccuracy in the first year
  - Tutor grade in the second year essay
- Other proxies for ability have no significant effect
- Are their self-evaluation skills improving or are they anchoring with optimism to what they believe is the most likely mark i.e. they still don't really know the standard.