3ydd Gynhadledd Dysgu ac Addysgu

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# Crynoldebau / abstracts

‘Have you done the reading’?: Motivating students by foregrounding the purposes and potential benefits of the seminar session

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John Biggs has noted that teachers need to ‘specify the desired outcomes of…[their] teaching in terms not only of topic content’, but also in terms of ‘the level of understanding we want students to achieve’. By doing this, Biggs argues that teachers can then ‘set up an environment that maximises the likelihood that students will engage in the activities designed to achieve the intended outcomes’ (2005: 2). Over the last two years, the two of us have worked together to design and structure undergraduate seminar sessions that draw on this approach to effective teaching, in order to attempt to engage students in learning and skills development. In particular, through work on seminar design on three undergraduate film studies modules (Studying Film, Film Genre, and Film Authorship), we have tested out strategies designed to highlight to students that seminars don’t just serve as a way of further discussing content outlined in lectures or having a general discussion around a topic or required reading but that, instead, each seminar is an opportunity to develop key skills associated with the module’s learning outcomes and assignments (skills relating to communication, argumentation, presentation and critical reflection on their own skills development). In this paper, we will outline and critically reflect on the strategies we have employed and tasks we have given to students in seminars, in order to illustrate to them the ways in which the knowledge they gain from seminars (both in terms of preparation, reading and group discussion) can be useable and transferrable in a range of contexts, and the degree to which such strategies have motivated and encouraged students to prepare for their seminars and to engage in the learning process. As PhD supervisor and PhD student respectively, we will also reflect on how, through these activities, we have worked together to exchange ideas and develop our teaching skills and practices in a reciprocal fashion.