

Self- and Peer-Assessment: A role for learning in HE?

- Paul Orsmond Staffordshire University
- Teach biology – University Learning and Teaching Fellow – interest in assessment

Purpose of Assessment

- End-point achievement (Summative)
- Forming/shaping learning (Formative)
- Fostering lifelong learning (Sustainable)

Sustainable Assessment

- Assessment that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the students to meet their own future learning needs
 - Focus on learning now and equips students to learn and assess themselves beyond the immediate task
- Sustainable learning

Issues with Existing Practices (Boud, 2005)

- Learners look to others and don't develop their own judgements and fail to use appropriate standards
- Assessment often emphasis solutions rather than problem formulation
- Unrealistic/decontextualised settings
- Learners involvement in assessment omitted
- Courses often imply collaboration as cheating

Issues with Existing Practices

- Constructive alignment
- *Form and function* of assessment
 - An essay/poster/portfolio – a history of prior experience
 - Learning outcomes explicit in the function

Self- and Peer-Assessment

- *‘Whenever we learn we question ourselves. How am I doing? Is this enough? Is this right? How can I tell? Should I go further? In the act of questioning is the act of judging ourselves and making decisions about the next step. This is self-assessment’ (Boud’s 1995)*
- Peer assessment defined by Topping *et al.* (2000) as *‘An arrangement for peers to consider the level, value, worth, quality or successfulness of the products or outcomes of learning of others of similar status’.*
- Students closely involved in assessment.

Self-Assessment

- *Whenever we learn we question ourselves. (Transparency)*
- *How am I doing? (Standards/context - judgement)*
- *Is this enough? (Criteria/standards – judgement)*
- *Is this right? (Feedback against criteria and outcomes)*
- *How can I tell? (Active reflection/identify learning needs)*

Learning now

- *Should I go further? (Strategies of learning – beyond the now)*
- *In the act of questioning is the act of judging ourselves and making decisions about the next step (Life-long learning).*

Criteria, Feedback and Standards

- Criteria – against which judgements are made - consideration on construction. Common understanding between tutor and students
- Feedback – students need to understand/recognise where they are and where they need to be/able to close the gap
- Standards – level of attainment or degree of quality

Rationale

- Student-focused *‘The essence of the learning perspective is that it considers all decisions about teaching and assessment (constructive alignment) in the light of the impact or potential impact on student learning’*. Brew (1995 page 24)
- Conceptual change in the ‘self’ adopting a new view of discipline

Self- and Peer-Assessment-related Discourse

New discourse

- learning for unknown future
- equipping students to learn-how-to-learn
- judging learning process
- identifying what learning needed
- analysing learning strategies
- integrated learning and assessment