Learning through Assessment AS Learning

Purpose:
To explore some research related to assessment AS learning.

Assessment AS Learning
Assessment AS learning involves students in becoming more responsible participants in the whole learning process. They: understand the purposes of their work; generate personal learning goals that link into the broader Standards they are working towards; ask themselves metacognitive questions to actively reflect on their progress; and regularly undertake informal and formal self and peer assessment.

What you need:
• 1 copy of page 1 (this page) per team of teachers (3-6 people)
• 1 copy of pages 2 & 3 (back-to-back) per team
• 1 copy of page 3 (enlarged 140% to A3 size) per team - or a blank A3 sheet.

Step 1:
• In small groups READ the research quotes on pages 2 and 3 - perhaps through alternating who reads out each successive quote.

Step 2:
• DISCUSS the issues that are raised by this research for your context.
• SHARE examples of using “assessment AS learning” with your students.

Step 3:
• TELL STORIES about self assessment and peer assessment in your own lives, beyond work.
  e.g. “He looks sad since …” (peer assessment)
  “She is always talking and never listens.” (peer assessment)
  “I am pretty good at cooking sponges.” (self assessment)
  “I am improving my golf swing.” (self assessment)
• DISCUSS how informal self and peer assessment interact with our sense of well-being.

Step 4:
• In small groups do a PMI (De Bono’s: Plus, Minus Interesting) on assessment AS learning.
• SHARE with the whole group ONE idea from each column in your PMI table.

Office of Learning and Teaching, DE&T
Research Quotes: Assessment AS Learning

“Effective assessment empowers students to ask reflective questions and consider a range of strategies for learning and acting. Over time, students move forward in their learning when they can use personal knowledge to construct meaning, have skills of self-monitoring to realize they don’t understand something, and have ways of deciding what to do next … Students, as active, engaged, and critical assessors, can make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and master the skills involved … Students are their own best assessors.” (Lorna Earl 2003, p. 25)

“Self assessment is at the heart of the matter.”
(Earl 2003, p. 25)

“It is very difficult for students to achieve a learning goal unless they understand that goal and can assess what they need to do to reach it. So self-assessment is essential to learning.” (Paul Black et al. 2003, p. 49)

“Peer- and self-assessment helped the project teachers make the criteria for evaluating any learning achievements transparent to students, so enabling them to develop a clear overview both of the aims of the work and of what it means to complete it successfully” (Black et al. 2003, p. 52). They also found that students need to “be taught the habits and skills of collaboration in peer assessment. Both because these are of intrinsic value and because peer-assessment can help develop the objectivity required for effective self-assessment” (p. 52-3). They also argue that through peer assessment students much more clearly learn what constitutes quality work - and are stretched to rethink their own work as a consequence.

The “underpinning principle of self-assessment is that [students] are more responsible for and involved in their own learning”.
(Paul Weedon et al. 2002, p. 73)

“Spending time looking at other students’ work, rather than producing their own work, may seem like ‘time off-task’, but the evidence is that it is a considerable benefit, particularly for ‘low-attainers’. (Dylan Wiliam 2000, p.20)
Metacognition is the process of being aware of one's own learning: good learners monitor their learning and thinking processes through self-monitoring. It focuses the pupil’s evaluation on his or her own performance rather than in comparison with others, which we know is more likely to maintain motivation. (Gordon Stobart and Carolyn Gipps 1997, p. 18)

"Metacognition is not the same as learning, it is a subset of learning. Metacognition is one of the things that we want students to learn about at school because of the many professed benefits of metacognition. Learning is an active process where students may choose to act or not act ... Metacognition is the awareness individuals have of their own thinking and the evaluation and regulation of their own thinking."
(Jeni Wilson 2000 p. 79 original emphasis)

“Individual reflection and self-regulation are metacognitive processes; nonetheless, they have a social nature... one must adopt the perspective of an observer - to reflect is to engage in a conversation with oneself.” (Marilyn Goos et al. 1994, p. 308)

Having metacognition means that students “know what to do when they don’t know what to do”. (Guy Claxton, 1998)

Assessment as learning requires that students take an active role in their own learning and assessment.
## PMI

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