Professional Reading for Module 4

Focus Question:
What benefits does the research indicate stem from assessment AS learning?

Assessment AS learning research

We use assessment AS learning strategies to:
- Increase learner autonomy
- Advance understanding of subject
- Elevate the status of student from passive learner to assessor
- Involve students in critical reflection
- Demonstrate to students the concepts of subjectivity and judgement”.


“The underpinning principle of self-assessment is that [students] are more responsible for and involved in their own learning” and that “self-assessment would involve” students in:
- reflecting on past experience
- seeking to remember and understand what took place
- attempting to gain a clearer idea of what has been learned and achieved. …
- sharing responsibility for the organisation of their work
- keeping records of activities undertaken
- making decisions about future actions and targets.” (p. 73).

Paul Weeden and colleagues challenge teachers to clarify the “roles” in self-assessment:
“what is the teacher’s job and what is the pupil’s?” (p. 74).

“Self assessment is important in that it tends to be ipsative (the assessment is compared to the pupil’s previous achievement) rather than normative (compared with the achievements of other pupils)” (p. 77, original emphasis).


Self-assessment is “an essential component of formative assessment” (Black and Wiliam 1998, p. 143). In more recent work, Paul Black and colleagues (2003) concluded from their study in a range of schools and across subject areas that “peer- and self-assessment make unique contributions to the development of student learning - they secure aims that cannot be achieved in any other way” (p. 53).

Peer assessment also helps students focus on their own work, while they are using rubrics and criteria and assessing their peer’s work. While there can be some initial problems with introducing peer assessment the overall improvement that it brings to student learning makes the effort worthwhile.

Black et al (2003) found that “the interchange in peer discussions is in a language that students themselves would naturally use. Their communication with one another can use shared language forms and … can convey the meaning and value of the exercise to others still struggling. An additional factor is that students often accept, from one another, criticism of their work that they would not take seriously if made by their teacher” (p. 50).


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Metacognition and Self Assessment

“Metacognitive thinkers identify, monitor and regulate their thinking processes and strategies. Students need to become metacognitive thinkers so that they are able to identify their thinking and learning processes and styles, select appropriate strategies and processes for thinking and learning, and be able to set and act on [learning] goals.

Reflective and metacognitive learners are efficient and effective learners because they analyse and make judgments about their learning, monitoring and regulating their thinking processes and strategies. Regular self-assessment promotes the development of reflective and metacognitive skills which in turn facilitate richer and more informed self-assessment.

Teachers benefit from the use of student self-assessment because it provides valuable insights into their students’ thinking and learning. For example, through student self-assessment data teachers can learn how the students perceive themselves as learners, what they identify as their strengths and needs, and what they think of their progress. This source of assessment data is unlike many others because it taps the students’ beliefs about their own learning and performance.

The information gleaned from self-assessment enables students to establish personal learning goals and thus improve their own learning. It also enables teachers to plan appropriate learning experiences for their students …

Self-assessment is the monitoring of one’s own levels of knowledge, performance, learning, abilities, thinking, behavior and/or strategy use. It is about judging one’s own performance. Self-assessment is neither a recount of what has been done nor is it program evaluation …” (p.1-2).

“What can students self-assess?

Student self-assessment could focus on four main areas: knowledge, skills, values, attitudes” (p. 4). These can be further broken down, for example, skills can be assessed across the following categories: “research skills, communication skills, thinking skills and cooperative skills” (p.4).

An example proforma “Thinking about the Unit” has students respond to:

- **My understandings**
  - Three things I learnt were …
  - What I would still like to find out …

- **Research Skills**
  - I can use …
  - I am good at …
  - I need to improve …
  - I would rate my effort as excellent, good, fair [via tick boxes] because …

- **Activities**
  - I did these activities …
  - I enjoyed …
  - I didn’t enjoy … because …” (p. 102)


Reflection Question:

How will I self assess my assessment AS learning practices?

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