

Assessment in HE Conference

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Keynote address:

Sectarian divides and challenges in assessment

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Will you all provide me with
(anonymous) feedback please?

Write 3 things you which made you think

What if anything was new to you?

Write 3 things you disagree with (and why)

Thank you

My Research on Assessment

Student self-assessment 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2008a, 2009c, **2010a**, **2010e**, 2013b, **2015b**

Assessment Theory 2005, 2008b, 2009a, 2010b, 2010d, 2012a, **2012b**, **2012c**, 2013a

Metaphor 2006b, 2007a, 2007b

Assessment for Learning Theory 2007a, 2007c, 2008c, 2009a, 2010b

Sectarian Divisions 2007c, 2008b, 2008c, 2009a

National/Institutional issues 2002, 2006a, 2008c, 2009b, 2014a

“Intellectual progress is possible because newcomers can stand on the shoulders of giants. This feat is often confused with treading on their toes, particularly but not only by the newcomer.” (Scriven 1967, 38)

Main points of presentation

2. the relative roles of learners and tutors in feedback and assessment

1. ways in which assessment may have a place in the above discourses.

3. cross-sector concepts of feedback;

Conclusions

Students: taking a horse to water...

What is helpful feedback?

Tutors/peers **cannot** provide
formative feedback

Feedback depends on learners

Learners should do the thinking,
deciding, choosing, selecting...

Tutors: drowning in feedback

Do you feel ...

...you spend hours preparing feedback that is not used by students?

...you spend hours explaining feedback that is ignored?

...you provide similar feedback to the same students to no effect?

...you think students unexplainably ask for more feedback?

Students: drink?

How much/what feedback helps learning?

Less is more.

Feedback is not telling

Assignments, assessment process time-line

- Programme, module guides, assignment tasks, deadlines for time-management, ideas for content, organisation,
- Discussions of ‘quality’, criteria, standards, exemplars,
- Drafts and redrafts,
- Final draft, assessment, feedback, grading
- Assessment process normally finished
- **THEN.....my integrated student self-assessment model begins**
- Why?

Justice and Assessment



Food for thought

WHAT is ...

the integrated student self-assessment model

Model used in HE, UK across subject/skill areas
and

upper Secondary education in Sweden (17 to 20
year olds = FE)

Integrated ssa model process a)

Tutor

- Corrects and grades student work -separate sheet, returns work **NO** comments or grades

Students

- Receive own work **untouched**, reread /corrections
- Discuss with peers if have queries
- Read 2 or 3 peer work; discuss own and peer work

Tutor

Gives students own comments, **NO** grade

Does not interfere unless consulted – hardest part

Students

- Discuss all comments, grade peer and own work

Integrated ssa model process b)

Tutor

- Collects student peer and self-assessments with **grades**
- Tutor gives students grade

Students

- Compare own, peer grades and comments with tutor's: discussion if necessary
- Tutor gives students grade: discussion if necessary

Ethically, tutors must adjust their grades if students can provide evidence

Integrated ssa model process

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- Does not interfere unless consulted – hardest part of process
- **Students** discuss all comments, grade peer and own work

Tutor

- Collects student peer and self-assessments with **grades**
- Tutor gives students **grade**

Students

- Compare own, peer grades and comments with tutor's: discussion if necessary

Ethically, tutors must adjust their grades if students can provide evidence

Advantages of model with integrated peer/tutor feedback

“The results showed that while both conditions benefited learning, self-assessment with integrated tutor feedback helped students identify and correct more errors (those that they or peers had not been aware of) than self-assessment prior to peer or tutor feedback. Interestingly, this study not only shows the benefits of integrating external and internal feedback but **it also shows ways of helping students internalise and use tutor feedback**”
(Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2005 p9)

Two questions to clarify process?

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Why theory?

Practice is what we do

Empirical research – what we do and how

Theory = Why: needed to improve, develop

What is theory?

Coherence between definitions of terms and
relationality between them

Assessment theories

**Assessment Definition + distinction SA/FA
(Scriven 1967)**

Theory of FA (Sadler, 1989, 2010)

**Theory of FA, SA + ssa (Taras 2005, 2009,
2010, 2012, 2013)**

SA = summative; FA = formative; ssa = self-assessment

“Assessment for Learning” (AfL)

Is AfL

- a) same/similar to FA
- b) different to FA

Problem: between AfL and FA discourses

AfL developed from

Black and Wiliam 1998 review of research on FA
ONLY, world-wide renown

Black et al. 2003 p2 the 'Bible' of assessment for
learning (Taras 2009 critique)

Assessment for Learning “Theory”

There is confusion of:

1. process and functions of assessment
2. SA and FA are distinguished by functions
3. TWO definitions of formative assessment
4. assessment of process/product with classroom interaction
5. Separates SA + FA (cuts rich(est) feedback from SA)
6. Confusion AfL + FA (Taras 2009, 2012b)

Where is the “theory” in AfL?

First FA similar then same as AfL (Black et al 2003)

Then AfL = learning only (Black and William 2009)

BUT 3 of 4 AfL interventions are feedback from assessment

ie feedback through marking; peer and self-assessment; use of summative tests (4th = questioning)

FA (1) same as Sadler

FA (2) teacher action to improve L + T (William 2007)

AfL theory creates problems

FA separate process to SA ie
repetition (wastes time and effort)

Confuses change of criteria with
functions

SA (and criteria) implicit within FA

AfL theory problems solved if....

1. base SA + FA on processes
2. FA – one definition to encompass all contexts
3. explicit link between SA + FA processes
4. explicit link between processes and functions

What are assessment functions?

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What are assessment functions?

Uses to which the products of assessment are put:

Can be social, political and educational choices

Functions influence criteria, **NOT** standards

i.e. if selecting for entrance to course can have one focus (and criteria) but if assessing for an exam on a specific subject, may have another focus and different criteria

One assessment can have multiple functions

Compulsory Sector

Feedback is Classroom situated

FA and feedback = informal, ad hoc, (superficial) exchanges in classroom context

Problem claim 'FA' is better for learning

Self-assessment generally limited to standard model

NB CS dual definition FA:

1. learners respond to comments, update, refine work/learning
 2. teachers' responses to update and refine teaching
- teachers' responsibilities for control and impact on learners and learning (Black et al 2003)

Taras 2009 – for details

Thank you.

Any questions?

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy, light-colored lines that flow from the bottom left towards the top right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Relevant articles

- Taras, M. (2005) Assessment – Summative and Formative – some theoretical reflections, *British Journal of Educational Studies*. 53(3), 466-478
- Taras, M. (2007) Machinations of Assessment: Metaphors, Myths and Realities, *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 15(1) 55-69
- Taras, M. (2007) Assessment for Learning: understanding theory to improve practice *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 31(4) 363-371
- Taras, M. (2009) Summative Assessment: the Missing Link for Formative Assessment *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Feb 33(1), 57–69
- Taras, M. (2010) Back to Basics: definitions and processes of assessments, *Revista Práxis Educativa*, Vol. 5, No 2 (2010) 123-130.
<http://www.revistas2.uepg.br/index.php/praxiseducativa/article/view/1829/1386>
- Taras, M. (2012) Where is the Theory in Assessment for Learning? *Online Educational Research Journal* <http://www.oerj.org>
- Taras, M. (2012) Assessing Assessment Theories. *Online Educational Research Journal* <http://www.oerj.org>
- Taras, M. (2015) Situating power potentials and dynamics of learners and tutors within self-assessment models, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 39, 1-18.

WHY integrated ssa model process?

1. Return work which is important ie for **grading**
NO grade, no comments. WHY?

Returned work seen with fresh eyes

2. Learners re-understand own work as assessors

Feedback needs to be dialogic

3. Peer readings, discussions, then, tutors comments

Tutor rarely needed - students do thinking

4. Students grade own and peers' work

Practice assessment process and product

5. Tutors provide grade, students discuss

Students compare own/peers' comments and grades to tutors'

