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

Metaphor 2006b, 2007a, 2007b
Assessment for Learning Theory 2007a, 2007c, 2008c, 2009a, 2010b
Sectarian Divisions 2007c, 2008b, 2008c, 2009a
“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
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

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- 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?
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)


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 Wiliam 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 (Wiliam 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?
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?
Relevant articles

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’*