SELF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION: PROCESS OF LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The self-assessment component is substantial research to support the effectiveness of self-assessment and the value of helping students learn to assess their own work. This section will help you to learn more about self-assessment. An extensive example in this paper is based on the type of inexpensive handheld calculators that are commonly used at all educational levels. The questions in the list are general- purpose, self-assessment questions. You can use them in any course you are taking or in any unit you are studying in a course. Notice that you are unlikely to find such questions on a final exam in a course. Your personal learning goals may be quite different than a course instructor has in mind. Moreover, it is difficult for a course instructor to accurately measure your progress in achieving the types of goals listed in the set of questions.

INTRODUCTION

Assessment and evaluation are two different ideas. Assessment gathers information. Evaluation interprets the information according to values, standards, and so on. It is relatively common to talk about three forms of evaluation: formative, summative, and long-term residual impact. Formative evaluation allows timely feedback that can be incorporated into a process, project, or procedure in an ongoing basis. Summative evaluation is done after a process, project, or procedure has been completed, and it provides information about the overall results. In school settings, a single letter or number grade is often used to summarize the evaluation. Long-term residual impact evaluation looks at the situation a substantial period of time frequently months to a year or more after the summative evaluation has been done, and reports on the continuing impact.

Here is a way to think about assessment from a self-assessment point of view. Select some subject area or topic that you have studied recently. Ask yourself the following list of questions. How can I (a learner) tell if I have learned well enough?

• To serve my current needs, and so that it increases my knowledge of myself as a learner?

• So that it will stay with me, for use in the future and as a foundation for additional learning in the future?

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•   To transfer my new knowledge and skills across disciplines and to new (perhaps novel) situations where it is applicable?

•   So I have some insight into what I don't know, why I might want to learn some of the things that I don't know but might want to know, and pathways to doing the learning?

ASSESSMENT BY SELF AND OTHERS

Learning is a personal process that goes on inside your brain and the rest of your body. Each learner is unique, and the learning process for each learner builds upon his or her previous learning. Your brain is naturally inquisitive and is a lifelong learner. You are the single most important component of your learning environment. Over the years, you have learned a great deal about yourself as a learner. You know some of your strengths, weaknesses, preferred learning styles and environments, and so on. As a preservice teacher, you might want to think about whether your teachers and other components of our informal and formal educational system have done help you acquire knowledge and skills about yourself as a learner. Can you think of things that might have been done better? For example, are you skilled at met cognition—thinking about your thinking processes? With appropriate help, even kindergarten students can gain considerable skill in met cognition.

Think about a course you have taken in the past. You had some reasons for taking the course. You can think of these reasons as being goals that you hoped to accomplish by taking the course, and/or goals that taking the course might help you to accomplish. At the same time, the instructor had some goals for the course, and probably the institution or department offering the course had some goals. The point is, there are goals that you set for yourself, and there are goals set by others. Typically, there is an overlap between the sets of goals. In self-assessment, you want to develop skills and accuracy in assessing how well you are doing both in the goals that you set for yourself and in the goals set by the course instructor and program of study.

RESEARCH ON SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment, at a conscious and at a sub-conscious level, is a routine and ongoing human activity. Self-assessment is a very important idea in education that often does not receive the attention it deserves. This is true even though there has been considerable research that supports the value of students learning to self-assess. Here is some quoted material from a detailed analysis of the research literature.

Many successful innovations have developed self- and peer-assessment by pupils as ways of enhancing formative assessment, and such work has achieved some success with pupils from age 5 upward. This link of formative assessment to self-assessment is not an accident; indeed, it is inevitable. To explain this last statement, we should first note that the main problem that those who are developing self-assessments encounter is not a problem of reliability and

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trustworthiness. Pupils are generally honest and reliable in assessing both themselves and one another; they can even be too hard on themselves. The main problem is that pupils can assess themselves only when they have a sufficiently clear picture of the targets that their learning is meant to attain. Surprisingly, and sadly, many pupils do not have such a picture, and they appear to have become accustomed to receiving classroom teaching as an arbitrary sequence of exercises with no overarching rationale. To overcome this pattern of passive reception requires hard and sustained work. When pupils do acquire such an overview, they then become more committed and more effective as learners. Moreover, their own assessments become an object of discussion with their teachers and with one another, and this discussion further promotes the reflection on one's own thinking that is essential to good learning. Thus self-assessment by pupils, far from being a luxury, is in fact an essential component of formative assessment. When anyone is trying to learn, feedback about the effort has three elements: recognition of the desired goal, evidence about present position, and some understanding of a way to close the gap betweenthe two. All three must be understood to some degree by anyone before he or she can take action to improve learning.

CONCLUSION

Being a teacher is an awesome and demanding responsibility. As a teacher, you will find that you never know all the things that might be useful to know, and that you never have enough time to do as well as you know you can do. Now the question is who is responsible for addressing these holes in your knowledge? One approach is to assert that it is the university's responsibility during your current program of study. "They" should tell you exactly what calculator content knowledge you should have, and they should teach you the calculator pedagogical knowledge and skills that you will need when you become a teacher. A second approach is to think carefullyabout your own responsibilities. This situation provides you with an opportunity to be an independent, self-sufficient, intrinsically motivated learner. You can practice learning on your own and in taking responsibility for your own learning. As you do this learning, you can examineyour strengths and weaknesses as a learner of the calculator discipline. You can learn more aboutyour preferred learning style or styles in this content area.

Earlier we have discussed the Web as a large, global library. You know how to use a search engine and a browser. Do you think you can find information on the Web that will help to answer the seven questions given above? This is a difficult challenge. Probably you have not received any formal instruction on how to use the Web to find information about calculators, calculator arithmetic, and calculator pedagogy. This provides you with a good opportunity to testand expand your Web knowledge and skills.

It also gives you the opportunity to think about discipline-specific Web-based knowledge and skills. Each discipline is different. One aspect of learning a discipline is learning to make use of

the accumulated knowledge within that discipline. Among other things this means learning to read write, retrieve information, understand, and make use of the accumulated information.

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