# *Student Self-Assessment: An Overview of Research and Problems of Practice*

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# Agenda

- Definition and description of self-assessment

- Overview of research

- Implications for practice

# Definition of Self-assessment

- *Self-assessment* is not an evaluation of the self but rather of the work or learning done by oneself

- Several terms are used in the literature

  - self-evaluation

  - self-grading

  - self-rating

  - self-assessment

  - judgment of learning

# Summative vs. Formative Self-assessment

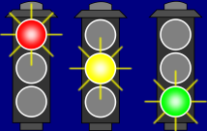- Summative self-assessment includes self-grading, self-rating, and judgments of learning



- Formative self-assessment occurs *during* the learning process and can therefore inform *revision and relearning*
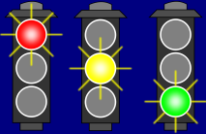
# Summative vs. Formative Self-assessment

- Summative self-assessment can undermine learning by rushing students to judgment, failing to engage them with the standards or criteria

- Nonetheless, making a judgment is likely to have an impact (positive or negative) on learning

- Hence, both summative and formative uses of self-assessment are within the scope of our review

# Types of Self-assessment

- rating one's work with smiley-faces
- rating understanding with traffic lights
- estimating the number of times an action can be completed successfully
- retrospective reporting of performance on a test
- estimating future performance on a test
- rubric-referenced self-assessment
- scripts

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- rubric-referenced self-assessment

# Formative, Rubric-referenced Self-assessment in Practice

- Jason Rondinelli and Emily Maddy's 7th grade students

- Brooklyn, NY

- Task: an essay about art

- http://www.studentsatthecenter.org/resources/student-centered-assessment-video-suite

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NEW ZEALAND

# Effectiveness of Self-assessment

In their review of K-12 self-assessment practices, Brown and Harris (2013) concluded that greater learning effects in were associated with the use of more complex judgments, if the techniques were supported by guided instruction.

# Effectiveness of Self-assessment

- A caveat: Until relatively recently, much of the research on self-assessment has focused on accuracy, not on its effects on learning.
  - We need much more of the latter, including research that reveals more about the conditions under which self-assessment promotes learning and achievement.

# Overview of Research

A frustration:

– Many researchers do not report the ways in which self-assessment was conducted in their studies

– Recommendations: Report!

  • Detailed procedures

  • Evidence of validity

# Overview of Research

What are the known individual and social influences on student self-assessment?

- students' competence and confidence in self-assessment

- inter-personal relations with teachers

- inter-personal relations with peers

- students' cultural contexts

- other stuff, surely….

# What is known about the <u>individual</u> influences on student self-assessment?

- Students' <u>competence</u>
  - Older students tend to be more accurate than young children
  - Higher performing students tend to produce either more consistent or more humble self-assessment than lower performing students. But…
    - some inaccuracy may be deliberate
    - very high achieving students do not have the option of over-estimating performance

# What is known about the individual influences on student self-assessment?

- Students' <u>confidence</u> and <u>willingness</u> to engage in self-assessment
  - some students are reluctant to self-assess
    - More true of summative than formative self-assessment?

# Overview of Research

What are the known <u>social</u> influences on student self-assessment?

- inter-personal relations with teachers

- inter-personal relations with peers

- students' cultural contexts

- other stuff, surely….

# What are the known <u>social</u> influences on student self-assessment?

- Inter-personal relations with teachers

  – issues of identity, power, and trust

# Identity, Power, and Trust

- "Self-assessment 'can be seen in a sinister light, interpreted as a way of making students discipline themselves with values that are effectively imposed upon them' (Brown & Knight, 2004, p. 57) in such a way that self-assessment becomes 'linked to notions of surveillance and social control' (Brown, Bull, & Pendlebury, 1997, p. 185).

- "Tan (2004) argues that self-assessment can be 'part of the self-policing machinery of normalization that sustains compliant identities in students…. The students' self-assessment practice subjects the students to self-surveillance over what prevailing discourses dictate knowledge should (be assessed to) be' (p. 659).

- "Taras (2010), also referring to higher education contexts , prefers self-assessment in which the students are empowered to decide for themselves what the learning goals are, and whether or not their own work meets those expectations.

- Raider-Roth (2005) reported that American grade six students carefully selected what they would disclose to teachers, and their decisions about disclosure depended on trust"  (Andrade & Brown, 2016, p. 324).

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# What are the known <u>social</u> influences on student self-assessment?

– Inter-personal relations with peers

  • Some students have concerns about their psychological safety when self-assessments are made public to peers, e.g., as traffic lights or answering questions out loud

– If lack of trust in the classroom is widespread, self-assessments disclosed in class are likely to produce counterfeit data

# What are the known <u>social</u> influences on student self-assessment?

- Cultural context

In some societies, giving oneself a good assessment can be viewed as inappropriate boasting. In Confucian-heritage cultures, people are more constrained from making positive self-assessments by social modesty norms than those from individualistic societies. Being highly confident in oneself is encouraged in other societies (e.g., the United States particularly) and can lead to self-promotion or over-rating. In contrast, societies that prioritize equality (e.g., Sweden) or which actively resent genuinely superior performance (e.g., the "tall poppy syndrome" in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia) may discourage realistic self-assessment of superior performance or proficiency. The potential effect of cultural and societal norms on student self-assessment seems obvious but is largely unexamined (Andrade & Brown, 2016, 326).

# Conclusion

- The power of self-assessment is dependent upon the conditions under which it is implemented.

  – it is highly likely that the way self-assessment is implemented determines, at least in part, whether it is empowering to students or an imposition on them

# Implications for Practice

- Keep it formative

    - Including student self-assessments as part of summative course grades introduces high-stakes consequences for honest, accurate evaluations

    - When a self-evaluation counts toward a total grade or mark, there can be a strong temptation to inflate, especially if there are serious consequences for performance

    - Treating self-assessment as a *self-regulatory competence* is better than using self-evaluations for evaluation purposes.

# Implications for Practice

- Students must be taught how to self-assess

- Students should have access to clear criteria

  - Accuracy is improved when students are involved in generating the assessment criteria

- Self-assessment should be followed by opportunities to revise/redo

# Implications for Practice

- Unless feedback is to be given, self-assessment could be private

- Feedback must be supportive, constructive

- Social response bias and response style can be managed by encouraging honesty and accuracy

- Samples of target performances, particularly exemplars, might enhance accuracy if the models are used as benchmarks