"To learn or not to learn" from formative assessment and formative feedback? What the literature says.

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Aims

- To disseminate learning and findings from the early stages of my EdD research project such that:
  - Learning in respect of the **process** and findings is shared
  - Awareness is raised in relation to the subject matter
  - Discussion is generated and questions are raised to help me develop the research project

Outline

- Background and rationale
- Literature search
- Literature review
- Ethical approval
- Key issues
- Next steps

Background and Rationale

- Ability to make **decisions**, **problem-solve** and [clinically] **reason** is paramount to graduate practice and professional integrity
- **How are these skills learned?**
- **What specific learning opportunities have influenced this learning?**
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2006: 20) "...appropriate and timely feedback to students on assessed work in a way that promotes learning and facilitates improvement..."

Best Learning Strategies?

- "Trial and error" learning is essential to the learning process

  Race (1994)

- "Trial and error" learning is ineffective, unnecessary and unhelpful

  Sadler (1989)

- Formative assessment and formative feedback have the ability to encourage an individual to change and modify their activities to promote ongoing learning

  Black and Williams (1998)

- Formative assessment and formative feedback directly influence learner motivation

  Brown (1999); MacMillan and McLean (2005); Race (2005); Irons (2008)

- Learners do not always use feedback

  Irons (2008)

- Formative assessment and formative feedback is reliant upon, in part, the learner's motivation to reduce this mismatch between actual and expected performance

  Biggs (1998)

- Assessment strategies can precipitate a strategic and tactical learning approach such that learners aim to understand the "rules of the game"

  Norton (2007)

- Formative assessment and formative feedback nurture the summative assessment process, especially when the theory/skill being learned is new

  McAlpine (2004)

- Feedback can have the most powerful single effect on achievement

  Rushton (2005)

Aim of the Study

- To investigate the worth attributed to formative assessment and formative feedback by learners
  - Discover the impact of formative assessment and formative feedback on the trajectory of learning
  - Correlation between the learner and educator's view of its role?

What do I hope to achieve?

- Uncover the extent to which learners and educators **truly** understand their responsibilities, and those of other stakeholders, with respect to formative assessment and formative feedback within higher education
  - Students are supported along their individual learning continuum
  - Staff are educated, supported and guided

Definitions

- <u>Formative assessment</u> is "any task or activity which creates feedback (or feedforward) for students about their learning"

- <u>Formative feedback</u> is "… any information, process or activity which affords or accelerates student learning based on comments …"

Irons (2008: 7)

Theoretical Position and Research Paradigm

- Inductive position
- Interpretive paradigm
- Flexible

"…capture, interpret and explain how a group [of students] … experience and make sense [of formative assessment and formative feedback] …" (Robson, 2002: 89)

Analysis

Theory

Data

Practice

Method

Central Research Question

What is the value and impact of formative assessment and formative feedback to the learning experience of students?

- What worth do learners and educators place on formative assessment and formative feedback within and across the learning spectrum?
- What role does formative assessment and formative feedback play in the "teaching" experience of the educator?
- Is there difference or similarity between the worth placed on formative assessment and formative feedback by learners and educators?
- Is there difference or similarity between practice-based educators and university-based educators as to the role and merit of formative assessment and formative feedback?
- How is formative assessment and formative feedback used to support the summative assessment process across the spectrum of education?
- What are the key features of formative assessment and formative feedback across education and how can these be implemented more widely?

Literature Search Strategy

- **Search Terms:**
  - Formative assessment (FA)
  - Formative feedback (FFB)
  - Learning (L)
  - Formative evaluation (FE)

Koh (2008)

- **Search Dates:**
  - January 1998 – March 2009

Black and Wiliam (1998)

Search Results

	Database	Dates	Terms	In	What	Result	First Screen	Comments
#1	EBSCO	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Abstract	Phrase	228	50	
#2	EBSCO	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Abstract	Phrase	27	8	
#3	EBSCO	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Abstract	Phrase	89	2	
#4	Emerald	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Abstract	Words	8	3	
#5	Emerald	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Abstract	Words	5	2	as #4
#6	Emerald	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Abstract	Words	8	0	
#7	ERIC	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Abstract	Phrase	98	32	Peer reviewed
#8	ERIC	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Abstract	Phrase	15	3	Peer reviewed
#9	ERIC	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Abstract	Phrase	40	1	Peer reviewed
#10	CINAHL	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Abstract	Phrase	22	3	
#11	CINAHL	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Abstract	Phrase	7	2	
#12	CINAHL	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Abstract	Phrase	27	1	
#13	Wiley InterScience	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Keywords	Phrase	5	3	
#14	Wiley InterScience	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Keywords	Phrase	0	0	
#15	Wiley InterScience	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Keywords	Phrase	0	0	
#16	Web of Science	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Topic	Phrase	215	20	
#17	Web of Science	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Topic	Phrase	113	12	
#18	Web of Science	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Topic	Phrase	139	2	
#19	British Education Index	?	?	?	?	?	?	

The Literature: the favourable

- Reactivate/consolidate prerequisite skills/knowledge
- Focus attention on important aspects
- Encourage active learning strategies
- Give opportunity to practice skills and consolidate learning
- Provide knowledge of outcomes
- Provide corrective feedback
- Help students monitor their own progress
- Develop self-evaluation skills
- Encourage self-regulated learning
- Guide the choice of ongoing learning activities
- Help students feel a sense of accomplishment
- Develop deep thinking and deep learning
- Maintain motivation and self-esteem
- Encourage employability skills

The Literature: the less favourable

○ Encourage a surface learning approach

○ Promote "assessment careers"

○ Encourage rote learning

○ Promote overconfidence

○ Be unnecessary once the summative marks are known
○ Poor achievers are less likely to seek formative feedback

○ Be inhibitory to student progress

○ Be underutilised by the learner

○ Be useless without summative assessment

○ Conflict with learning cultures

○ Under-resourced area of higher education

Gijbels and Dochy (2006)

Ecclestone and Pryor (2003)

Irons (2008)

Yorke (2003)

Sinclair and Cleland (2007)

Smith and Gorard (2005)

Higgins, Hartley and Skelton (2002)
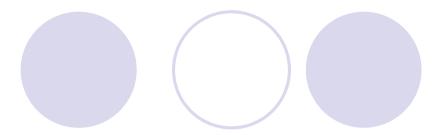*Covic and Jones (2008)*

Taras (2009)

Davies and Ecclestone (2008)

Perera et al (2008)

Ethical Approval

- National Research Ethics Service (NRES)
- Lengthy
- +/- local R&D Departments

Key Issues

- Need to look across the spectrum of education
- Considering the same
- Keep to task

Next Steps

- British Education Index search to complete first literature search

- Ongoing - read and review the literature

- Complete NRES application and submit for approval

- Schedule of work and timeframes

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