



University of HUDDERSFIELD

University of Huddersfield Repository

Eastburn, Sara

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

Original Citation

Eastburn, Sara (2009) "To learn or not to learn" from formative assessment and formative feedback? What the literature says. In: School of Education and Professional Development Postgraduate Research Conference, 24th March 2009, University of Huddersfield, UK. (Unpublished)

This version is available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/5770/>

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>

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

Sara Eastburn
EdD Student

School of Education and Professional Development
Research Festival – March 2009

s.eastburn@hud.ac.uk

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



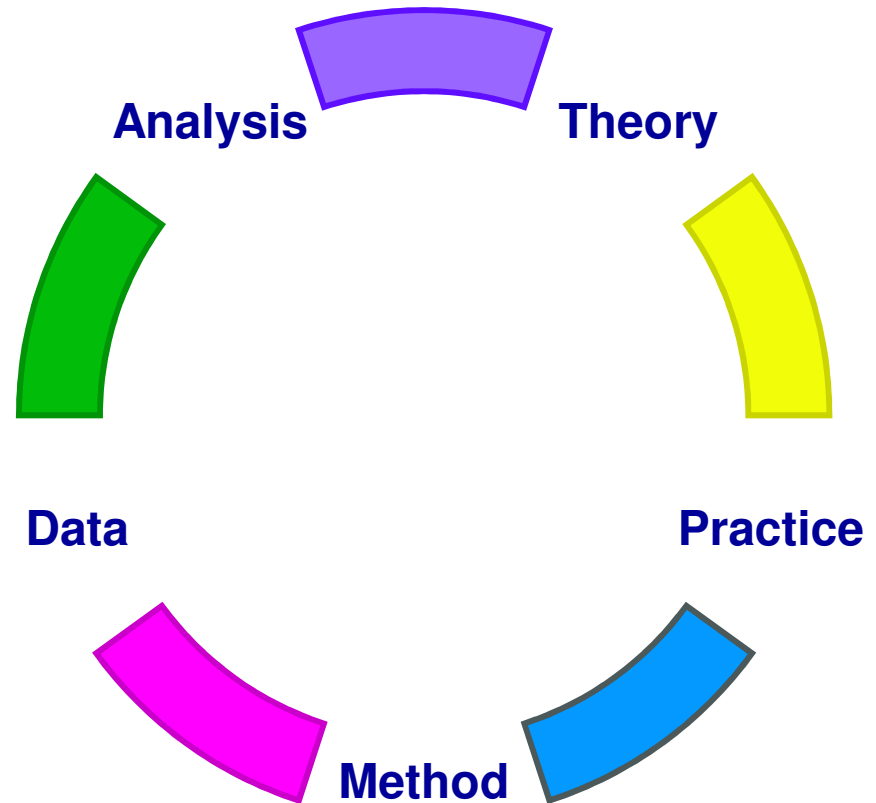
- Formative assessment is “any task or activity which creates feedback (or feedforward) for students about their learning”
- Formative feedback is “... any information, process or activity which affords or accelerates student learning based on comments ...”

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)





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
Gijbels and Dochy (2006)
- Promote “assessment careers”
Ecclestone and Pryor (2003)
- Encourage rote learning
Irons (2008)
- Promote overconfidence
Yorke (2003)
- Be unnecessary once the summative marks are known
- Poor achievers are less likely to seek formative feedback
Sinclair and Cleland (2007)
- Be inhibitory to student progress
Smith and Gorard (2005)
- Be underutilised by the learner
Higgins, Hartley and Skelton (2002)
Covic and Jones (2008)
- Be useless without summative assessment
Taras (2009)
- Conflict with learning cultures
Davies and Ecclestone (2008)
- Under-resourced area of higher education
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

References

- Biggs J (1998) Assessment and classroom learning: a role for summative assessment? *Assessment in Education* 5, pp. 103-110
- Black P and William D (1998) Assessment and Classroom Learning. *Assessment in Education* 5 (1), pp. 7-73
- Brown S (1999) "Institutional Strategies for Assessment" in S Brown and A Glasner (Eds.) *Assessment Matters in Higher Education. Choosing and Using Diverse Approaches*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Covic T and Jones MK (2008) Is the essay resubmission option a formative or summative assessment and does it matter as long as the grades improve? *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 33 (1), pp. 75-85
- Davies J and Ecclestone K (2008) "Straitjacket" or "springboard for sustainable learning"? The implications of formative assessment practices in vocational learning cultures. *The Curriculum Journal* 19 (2), pp. 71-86
- Ecclestone K and Pryor J (2003) "Learning Careers" or "Assessment Careers"? The Impact of Assessment Systems on Learning. *British Educational Research Journal* 29 (4), pp. 471-488
- Gijbels D and Dochy F (2006) Students' assessment preferences and approaches to learning: can formative assessment make a difference? *Educational Studies* 32 (4), pp 399-409
- Higgins R, Hartley P and Skelton A (2002) The Conscientious Consumer: reconsidering the role of assessment feedback in student learning. *Studies in Higher Education* 27 (1), pp. 53-64
- Irons A (2008) *Enhancing Learning through Formative Assessment and Feedback*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Koh LC (2008) Refocusing formative feedback to enhance learning in pre-registration nurse education. *Nurse Education in Practice* 8, pp. 223-230
- McAlpine L (2004) Designing learning as well as teaching. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 5 (2); 119-134
- MacMillan J and McLean MJ (2005) Making first-year tutorials count. Operationalising the assessment-learning connection. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 6 (2), pp. 94-105

References

- Norton L (2007) "Using assessment to promote quality learning in higher education" in A Campbell and L Norton (Eds.) *Learning, Teaching and Assessing in Higher Education. Developing Reflective Practice*. Exeter: Learning Matters Ltd.
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2006) *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. Section 6: Assessment of students*. Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency.
- Perera J, Lee N, Win K, Perera J and Wijesuriya L (2008) Formative feedback to students: the mismatch between faculty perceptions and student expectations. *Medical Teacher* 30, pp. 395-399
- Race P (1994) *The Open Learning Handbook: promoting quality in designing and delivery flexible learning*. London: Kogan Page.
- Race P (2005) *Making Learning Happen. A Guide for Post-Compulsory Education*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Robson C (2002) *Real World Research* (2nd Ed.) Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Rushton A (2005) Formative assessment and formative feedback: a key to deep learning? *Medical Teacher* 27 (6), pp. 509-513
- Sadler R (1989) Formative assessment and the design of instructional; systems. *Instructional Science* 18, pp. 119-144
- Sinclair HK and Cleland JA (2007) Undergraduate medical students: who seeks formative feedback? *Medical Education* 41, pp. 580-582
- Smith E and Gorard S (2005) "They don't give us our marks": the role of formative feedback in student progress. *Assessment in Education* 12 (1), pp. 21-38
- Taras M (2009) Summative assessment: the missing link for formative assessment. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 33 (1), pp. 57-69
- Yorke M (2003) Formative assessment and formative feedback in higher education: Moves towards theory and the enhancement of pedagogic practice. *Higher Education* 45, pp. 477-501