

A photograph of a woman and a man outdoors. The woman, in the foreground, has short dark hair and is wearing a pink sleeveless top. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. The man, in the background, is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and is also smiling. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery and a fence.

# Conceptions of Assessment

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## Aims of this session

- To examine possible conceptions of assessment which affect our expectations of outcomes
- To consider opportunities for Assessment with students in Higher Education
- To share some UCL Institute of Education examples of professional development and master's teaching assessment practices

## Concepts of assessment

My normal starting point is this type of activity. In fact, I worked this exact activity with colleagues from Ayb yesterday and they identified some interesting 'labels' for the role of the assessor

### **Activity**

In groups/pairs identify all words/phrases which come to mind when you consider the role of assessor.

Write each one on a postit note

Now arrange the elements of the assessors' role together and 'label' them

# The role of the assessor

- Process
- Outcomes
- Role
- Values
- Personal values
- Attributes

# Types or Categories of Assessment

## Assessment ...

- Formative - for learning
- Diagnostic - which focuses on an issue
- Ipsative - where an individual reflects on progress
- Summative - of learning
- Evaluative - which reflects on outcomes
- Self - which is reflective of personal achievements
- Peer - which involves peer response
- Informative - which informs next steps
- Monitoring - which allows 'checking' to happen

# Why consider conceptions?

According to Brown (2003) all pedagogical acts (including assessment) are affected by the conceptions teachers have about the act of teaching, the process and purposes of assessment, and the nature of learning among educational beliefs. It is critical for professional development that the conceptions that teachers have and the relationships of those conceptions among and between each other are made explicit.

# Improving learning through assessment

To improve learning through the medium of assessment, there are five important points.

1. Provision of effective feedback to pupils.
2. Active involvement of pupils in their own learning.
3. Adjusting teaching to take results of assessment into account.
4. Recognition of the influence of assessment has on learning.
5. Need for pupils to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve.

# What do you bring to assessment?

- Your own beliefs about learning and teaching;
- Your academic, professional and pedagogic knowledge including that gained through engagement with your course;
- Your cultural experiences

# Conceptions of Assessment - Brown

1. assessment is useful in improving teacher instruction and student learning by providing quality information for decision-making
2. assessment is about accountability of students through certification processes
3. teachers or schools are made accountable through internal or external evaluations
4. assessment is irrelevant or pernicious to the work of teachers and the life of students.

*Brown, 2003*

# Concepts of Assessment - Hargreaves

- 1.assessment as measurement (learning is seen as attaining objectives)
- 2.assessment as inquiry (learning is seen as the construction of knowledge)

*Hargreaves, 2005*

# Conceptions of Assessment – Hughes 2011; 2014

- Ipsative feedback, which is based on a comparison with a learner's previous performance and linked to long term progress is linked to the processes of learning and therefore more supportive for the learner than criterion-referenced feedback

# Assessment as a learning event

- Activity

Complete these propositions:

*Assessment will support learning best when ...*

*Without assessment a learner ...*

# Assessment examples

## Formative

- iPgCE – Module 1: PPM
- MA Advanced Educational Practice: TAR

## Monitoring

- MA Advanced Educational Practice: KIT

# Assessment examples cont:

## Peer

- iPGCE – Module 2: Subject Pedagogy

## Ipsative

- iPGCE and iPgCE Portfolio

## Diagnostic

- MA AEP – ISM Activity 2

## Conclusion:

- Being aware of our own conceptions of assessment is important – whether we are a lecturer or a student
- Some assessments support learning better than others
- How we respond to our assessment feedback is crucial in informing the learning process



# References

- Brown, G. T. (2003) Teachers' Instructional Conceptions: Assessment's Relationship to Learning, Teaching, Curriculum, and Teacher Efficacy. Paper presented to the Joint Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Associations for Research in Education. (AARE/NZARE), Auckland, NZ. November 28-December 3, 2003.
- Hargreaves, E. (2005) Assessment for Learning? Thinking outside the (black) box. *Cambridge Journal of Education*. 35 (2): 213-224.
- Hughes, G. (2011) Towards a personal best: a case for introducing ipsative assessment in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*. 36 (3) 353-367.
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