



Review for Session Topic: Students deciding on assessment criteria

Commentary on:

Hernández "Students' engagement in the development of written criteria to assess written tasks"

By

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This review examines one example of good practice which includes learners in the development of assessment criteria for formatively assessed work. It summarises the main ideas according to the sections and then a number in brackets e.g. (1), signals a question or issue which I have found pertinent to the development.

This is a very interesting case study which examines how students engaged with developing assessment criteria for Spanish writing tasks for final year undergraduates. The aim is to develop learner's communicative competence through production of a variety of written Spanish texts: written activities, a learning journal and a written portfolio. Not only is it an interesting research study, but it also raises pertinent questions about assessment.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY

The process describes how student groups negotiate and develop agreed criteria according to good practice; subsequently, the class discuss and agree final criteria to use with written work by students, and tutors in formative work (1).

The agreed criteria were used for assessment in the following ways:

- a) teacher assessed and then discussed the assessment with the student
- b) peers were provided with anonymised work to assess and provide feedback
- c) individual tutorial (week 6) on reflective self-evaluation + samples from learning journal

RATIONALE

One of the central issues is that students should be active participants.

One reproach of peer and self-assessment models is that students **often** have to use the criteria provided (Brew 1999).

The important issue of feedback is raised: that formative assessment can enhance learning **when** provided with **quality** feedback (Black and Wiliam 1998) (2)

It uses the first principle from the REAP project.

EVALUATION

Subjectivity is problematic because the tutor/researcher is the same person, but the advantage is that the research is not intrusive.

Students are shown to be happier with co-operative criteria and use expressions such as "more democratic" and "fairness".



Some student concerns were:

1. to ensure the exercise is taken seriously, and the best criteria are adopted
2. the criteria were not preferred by all
3. there were no grades provided by tutor or peers (or self?)
4. how to understand standards without grades (3)

QUESTIONS TO THE AUTHOR

1. I would be interested in having a list of the criteria the students agreed on.
2. How was quality feedback ensured in this case study?
Ramaprasad 1983/Sadler 1989 state that feedback is only such if it is of use?
3. The students perhaps raised the most important concerns of all. How were these concerns addressed?

FOR PARTICIPANTS

Before Rosario answers these questions, what do you think are the main issues raised by this case study?

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