Abstracts

Fostering self-regulated learners in a community of quality assessment practices

Therese Nerheim Hopfenbeck

Self-regulation has become an important field within educational research, but yet there is still little empirical research on the relation between self-regulation and assessment practices. The present paper explores how models of self-regulation and assessment can be linked through the development of metacognitive skills to improve students' learning outcomes. Knowledge from two studies will be used as examples to illustrate how self-regulation can be fostered and linked to developing communities of quality assessment practices in the classroom.

The effectiveness of methods for providing written feedback through a computer-based assessment for learning: a systematic review

Fabienne M. van der Kleij, Caroline F. Timmers, Theo J.H.M. Eggen

This study reviews literature regarding the effectiveness of different methods for providing written feedback through a computer-based assessment for learning. In analysing the results, a distinction is made between lower-order and higher-order learning. What little high-quality research is available suggests that students could benefit from knowledge of correct response (KCR) to obtain lower-order learning outcomes. As well, elaborated feedback (EF) seems beneficial for gaining

both lower-order and higher-order learning outcomes. Furthermore, this study shows that a number of variables should be taken into account when investigating the effects of feedback on learning outcomes. Implications for future research are discussed.

A range of approaches for studying the adoption of e-assessment

Andrew Boyle

This review article concerns electronic assessment (e-assessment). The article notes the patchy uptake of e-assessment; it has been widely and successfully used in some contexts, but not in others. The article reviews two approaches to conceptualising the uptake of e-assessment: predictions of e-assessment as a transforming force in education and applications of innovation diffusion scholarship and analysis. The article points out strengths and weaknesses of each approach, but concludes by arguing that e-assessment is a topic worthy of serious study. This implies that predictions of imminent ubiquity should be treated sceptically, and rigorous analytical techniques with a clear theoretical grounding should be used to investigate people's motivations when they decide whether or not to adopt e-assessment.

Redefining assessment: the struggle to ensure a balance between accountability and comparability based on a "testocracy" and the development of humanistic individuals through assessment

Bill Boyle, Marie Charles

This paper reviews the paradigms of international assessment within the current accountability and comparability agenda and projects towards a model of assessment for the next generation. The conceptualisation of that model has as it locus the support of pupils' humanistic development rather than the application of metric-based labels. The equating definition of assessment currently is, and has been for the last twenty years, testing and this has had resultant effects on

pedagogy and learning through the prevailing culture of "a testocracy that claims to sort, evaluate and rank" (Guinier, 2003). The authors propose a move towards redefining assessment. The focus of the definition to be less on judgement and metric but on the superiority of the affective and conative domains in support of pupil learning (Allal & Ducrey, 2000). This aim offers some prospect for future generations being exposed to an "equity pedagogy" (Banks, 1993) based on a core integration of assessment with teaching and learning to address the complexity and humanistic needs of the learner.

Knowing what to do next: the hard part of formative assessment?

Margaret Heritage

Formative assessment involves gathering evidence during the course of instruction to provide feedback to teachers and students about learning (Allal & Lopez, 2005; Black & Wiliam, 1998a; 1998b; Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2003; Shepard, Hammerness, Darling-Hammond & Rust, 2005). A central role for teachers in formative assessment is the use of evidence of student learning to make adjustments to teaching (Black & Wiliam, 1998a; 1998b). The purpose of this paper is to highlight specific challenges teachers experience when taking pedagogical action based on their interpretation of formative assessment evidence. The paper draws from two studies: one quantitative study showing the relative difficulties teachers have using evidence to inform instruction, and one qualitative study highlighting teacher challenges in using evidence and how those challenges can be addressed with assistance. Descriptions of the studies are presented, reasons for teacher difficulties are hypothesized, and areas of further research are suggested.