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Learning from Feedback: A Personal View

Student Learning from Tutor Feedback

Little to do with what tutors write but
everything to do with what tutors do

Definitions

Hattie and Timperley (2007)

- Feed up – enables learners to ask questions about goals
- Feed back – enables learners to answer questions about where they are now and consider their progress towards goals
- Feed forward – enables learners to answer questions about where they need to go next – activities for better progress

Definitions

Feed up = Where am I going

Feed back = How am I going

Feed forward = Where to next

Self-Assessment: Assessment as Learning

How am I doing? Is this enough? Is this right? How can I tell? Should I go further? In the act of questioning is the act of judging ourselves and making decisions about the next step. This is self-assessment' (Boud, 1995)

The student is the critical connection between assessment and learning. assessment as learning (Earl, 2008)

Nothing about marking!

Peer-Assessment

'An arrangement for peers to consider the level, value, worth, quality or successfulness of the products or outcomes of learning of others of similar status' Topping et al. (2000)

Background to Presentation

Background to Presentation

- The tutor concept of learning needs to reflect the tutor actions in developing learning environments – approaches to teaching, learning activities and using feedback.
- Thus it is important that individuals/departments have an understanding of what learning means to them

Background to Presentation

- Learning is a social process (as oppose to a purely cognitive process) that requires:
 - The development of learning groups demonstrating self- and peer-assessment
 - Encouragement of peer-learning around clarifying a good performance providing opportunities for students to develop error detection skills.
- These are not ‘bolt-on’ activities but are necessary structures

Characteristics of Social Learning

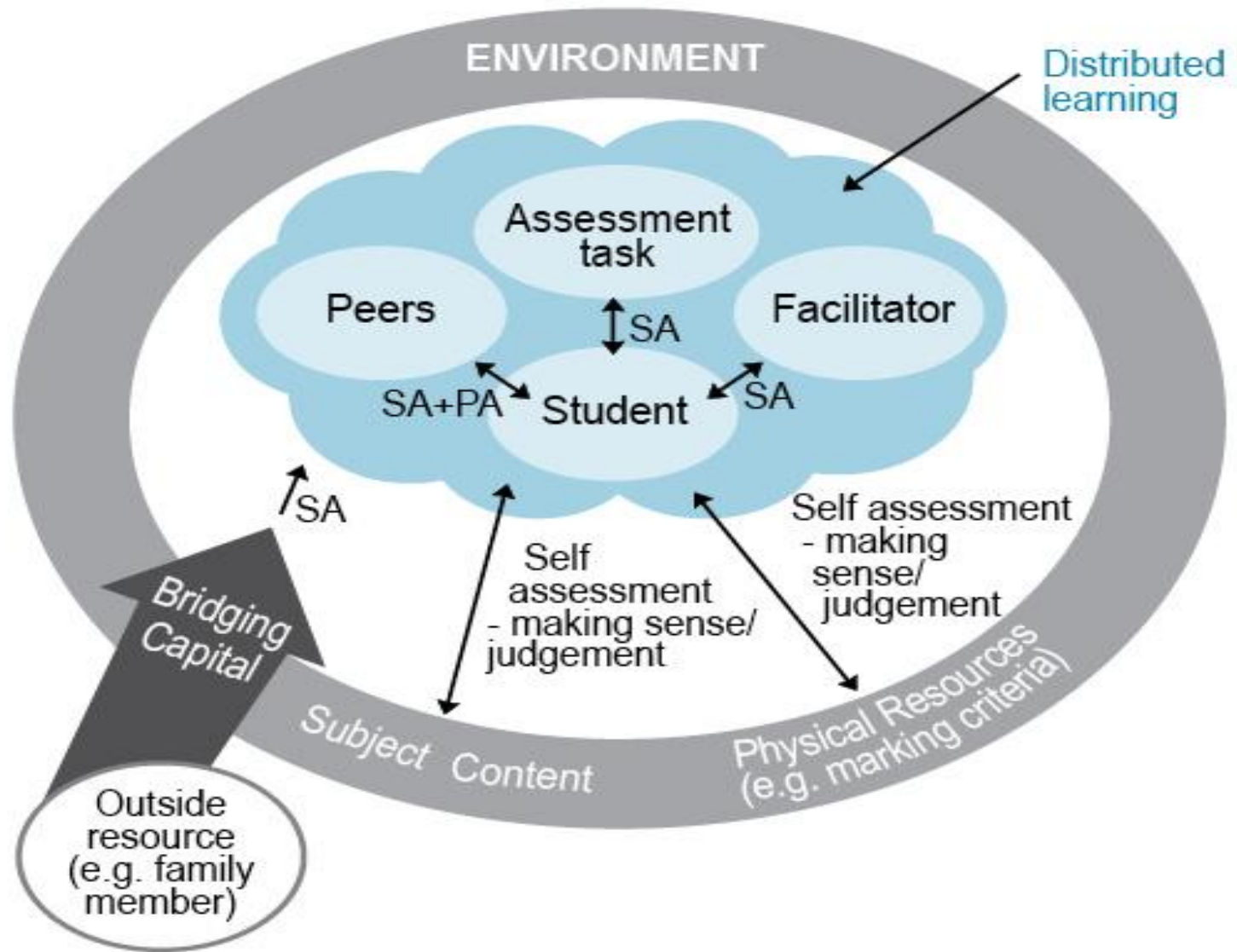
- This is not just about talking
- Situated learning – anthropology as compared to psychology
- Situated learning refers to the web of social relationships which influence how we
 - Attend to
 - Value
 - Interpret communication

Social Learning

- Within this dynamic social environment thinking is almost conducted through actions that change a given situation and hence the situation itself changes
- Learning may be conceptualised as reflecting *‘a concern with within-person changes, which modify the way in which we interpret and may act on our worlds. This concept of learning implies that we are shaped by and shape our worlds’* (Edwards, 2005).

Social Learning

- Third Generation of Assessment practice (James 2007) - which is seen as assessing learning as building knowledge as part of doing things with others.
- Strongly 'situated' in the social environment, and James' assertion that *'what is learned is not the property of an individual, but distributed within the social group'*



Characteristics of Social Learning

- Learning occurs through practice – becoming something.....
- Our students our becoming biologist
- Legitimate peripheral participation – first years are the newcomers third years are old timers
- Communities of practice. There are student and academic communities of practice – giving feedback involves two communities communicating

Student Practice – Self- and Peer-Assessment Inside and Outside the Curriculum

'[Feedback] starts as a funnel, it starts off really broad and wide, like the subject and you're looking at lots of different aspects and then you get narrower and narrower until you like get to a point where you know exactly what you're on about sort of thing...you know more about a specific thing than...having a general idea about it'

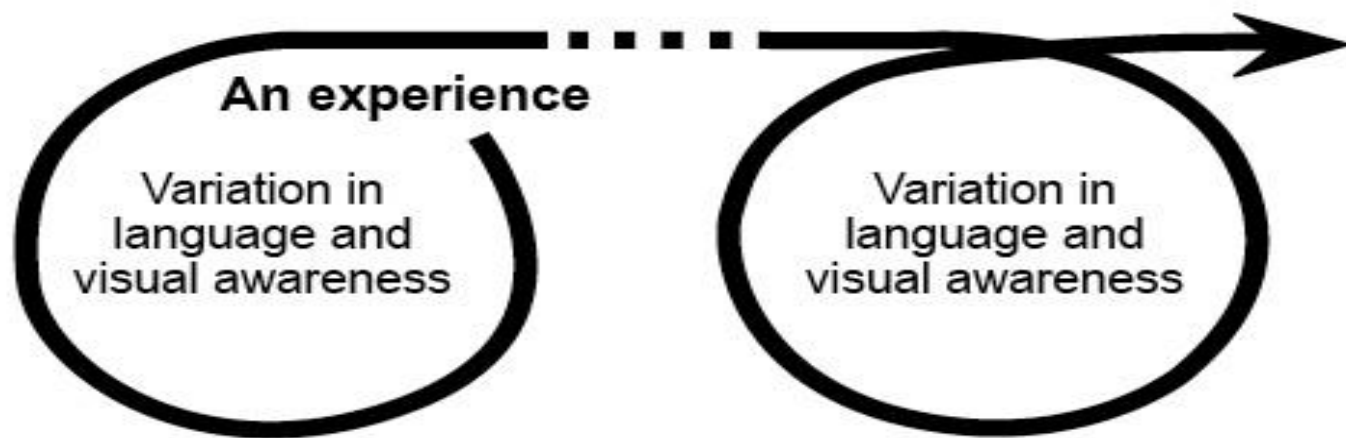
‘ It wasn’t just about giving feedback to other people it was also whilst I was giving feedback I was questioning my own work and learning from other people’ (Cartney, 2010).

'I mean we've only been together two years, but we've sort of learnt how each one operates... They may criticise [you], but somebody else might have a greater understanding (of the subject) and you now that they've got a greater understanding and so you know that you've got to sort of balance (their view and yours).'

'Once I had a problem [regarding feedback] with my dissertation supervisor. I thought I'd done things wrong...but I spoke to other people who were also his project students...and had the same problem...It wasn't a case that we were doing something wrong...it was more the feedback he was giving wasn't relevant to what we were trying to say'

Externalisation —
demonstrating new learning
followed by looking at peer
examples and discussion

Externalisation —
demonstrating new
learning followed by
discussion with tutor



Appropriation — making
sense followed by a new
interpretation of course
material

Appropriation — further
making sense followed by
changing conceptual
understanding

Student Practice

- Students have a recognisable 'student practice' outside the overt curriculum that changes over their period of study
- Self- and peer-assessment is part of that practice – that learning
- That practice includes self- and peer-assessment process – rich or poor
 - Rich – high achieving students – self-regulated
 - Poor – low achieving students – tutor regulated

Tutor Practice – Inside the Overt Curriculum

Tutor Practice

- Tutor practice links to tutor concept of learning
- Student communities of practice are not formal units that can be created, managed and even 'closed' through institutional policies
- Knowing they are there parallel to formal structures is helpful – we can enrich community learning

GOALS Process

In this process, activities need to provide opportunities for students to: **G**rasp the objectives to be learnt, then **O**rientate themselves towards their self learning, take specific **A**ctions as a result of the exercise, evaluate their **L**earning and develop **S**trategies for moving on as a result of their learning. The GOALS process to some extent is a model for the application of self-assessment as defined by Boud

Using the GOALS Process

- Exemplars
 - using previous cohorts work as learning tools
 - effective at stimulating ‘non-marking’ self- and peer-assessment
 - Effective for learning – Sambell (2009)
 - Allows for variation an ‘*awareness of coming to see a phenomenon or topic in an importantly new way*’ to be a necessary condition to learning.
 - Enhance students ability to write – task specification

Tutor Practice influences Student Practice

- AP. *'I think what is happening is that I am not learning alone anymore. Up to now what I concentrated on was learning from books and papers but now with this talking I am hearing what others are saying'*.
- PL. ***'Well it is not just that. Others say things and you think is that right and so you can challenge what is said, and most of the time AP is right'***.
- AP. *'We now meet outside of the University to talk. We have set up a group and we discuss what you say in the sessions, or we get different papers and discuss them as well'*.
- PL. ***'Yeah. The thing is, you hear new ideas, you can see a different perspective'***.
 - AP is now undertaking a PGCE and uses this discussion approach in classroom work.

Tutor Practice influences Student Practice

- Curriculum - dynamic and interactive process of learning, rather than just categories of description (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006)
- Learning experiences can be developed where student and tutor practice can be brought together, thus allowing students to learn because they recognise the tutor practice of being a biologists.

Tutor Practice influences Student Practice

- Research informed teaching - 'learning through practice' allowing 'research informed learning' to occur.
- In this way tutor feedback is integrated into the participation in practice and is not a modular 'bolt-on' accessory.
- Integrated practice, involving investigative group practical work, which illustrates one type of practice, has been shown to provide a vehicle whereby students receive extensive feedback on their ideas from other group members

Final Thoughts

- Self- and peer-assessment is a natural learning process that can be enriched through tutor practises – it is a key way in which learning through feedback occurs
- Curriculum design needs to reflective learning experiences students have outside the overt curriculum and allow learning through practice to occur. Successful community talk occurs through good curriculum design
- What tutors do –tutor practice - is key to students learning from feedback