**When I See My Reflection: Building Self-Assessment Skills in the Classroom**

**Abstract:**

Students need to cultivate self-assessment skills for use in the workforce, however, they struggle to do so in practice. In this session, we describe six self-assessment activities for participants to include in their classrooms. We begin with a preliminary demonstration, followed by a discussion of the importance of self-assessment. Next, we outline activities we use in our own classrooms. We conclude with further discussion and a final self-assessment activity. At the end of the session, participants will be able to describe the importance of self-assessment, will have a menu of activities, and will have the ability to develop new activities.

Keywords: Self-assessment, reflection, experiential

**Introduction**

In the workplace, students will not have someone “grading” their work and they will not always have the ability to receive feedback from others on a project. In many cases, students will need to use their own judgment regarding whether or not their work and contributions to the workplace are sufficient. Although self-assessment, defined as recognizing our own strengths and weaknesses in a particular domain (Mann, 2010), is an important skill to learn and practice, we found that our students struggled with practicing self-assessment within the classroom. Therefore, we strove to provide opportunities for students to practice self-assessment. Self-assessments may be used as a skills-building activity to teach and incentivize the development of abilities deemed important to the class (Gillis, 2019).

In each of our classrooms, we use a combination of methods for helping our students reflect upon their own performance and the quality of their work. Therefore, the purpose of this session is to outline several different methods for practicing self-assessment within the classroom and to practice participating in a self-assessment activity. We specifically describe six different types of self-assessment exercises that provide opportunities for students to reflect upon their learning, performance, teamwork, participation, preparation, and skills. After attending this workshop, attendees will be able to:

1. Describe why self-assessment is important to include in the classroom.
2. Implement six different types of self-assessment within their own courses.
3. Develop their own self-assessments based on themes and ideas generated during the session.

**Theoretical Foundations and Teaching Implications**

Self-assessments are valuable for a variety of pedagogical reasons. Self-assessments can improve students’ ability to learn inside the classroom when used as a tool to increase classroom-related skills (Gillis, 2019). In a meta-analysis of primary and secondary students, Panadero, Jonsson, and Botella (2017) found that self-assessments increase self-efficacy and motivation and action towards learning (self-regulated learning). Students also express positive reactions to self-assessments. Students reported increased self-efficacy in the classroom and a better understanding of the broader importance of preparing for and participating in class (Gillis, 2019).

**Learning Objectives**

The overarching learning objective related to our activities is specific to the self-assessment portion of the course, and thus can be integrated into any undergraduate or graduate course. This primary learning objective is: Demonstrate self-assessment skills, including the capability to identify your own strengths, weaknesses, and areas of growth.

**Overview of Self-Assessment Exercises**

The first exercise asks students to complete an open book, open note quiz at the beginning of class. Throughout the lecture, students are asked to share the answers to the quiz questions. Their answers provide a basis for conversation during the lecture. Students assess if they provided the correct answers to each item, as well as if they understand the answers. Students also can record any follow up questions about the item. This exercise allows students to understand and correct errors they made or understand what went well, in order to repeat the behaviors and encode information (Panadero, Brown, & Strijbos, 2016).

The second exercise involves having students grade their own projects or reports prior to submitting their projects for a grade. In this exercise we instructed students to submit a draft of their final projects along with a graded rubric (which encouraged open-ended comments) one week before their final project was due (W. Marget, personal communication, 2017). Student grades were not based on the quality of the submitted draft, but rather the quality of their own assessment of their work. In general, we found that teams who spend extra time on this self-assessment tended to do better on the final report than teams who did not take it seriously.

Third, following Chappell and Thomas (2019), we incorporated midsemester team feedback where students not only provide feedback to their team members, but they also have a chance to reflect on their own performance within the team. Following best practices for performance management, students are instructed to identify strengths and weaknesses with regard to their contributions to semester-long team projects about halfway through the semester. Students then meet with their team members where the team members outline areas of exemplar performance and areas where the students need to improve.

For the fourth type of self-assessment included in our classes, we adapted instructions from Gillis (2019) that allows students to reflect upon their participation in and preparation for classes. This exercise can either be done using paper and pencil or electronically using programs like PollEverywhere. We recognize that student engagement in a course goes beyond whether or not the students simply speaks up during class (Gillis, 2019). Specifically, a student can participate in class by reading the course material, discussing the course material with a friend, family member, or classmate outside of class, or listening to classmates and processing their experience during the class (Gillis, 2019). Therefore, at the conclusion of class, students are asked to consider how deeplythey read for class and any two of the following five criteria: (1) the time spent thinking/talking about the topic before class, (2) the degree to which they paid attention in class, (3) the effort they put into learning the material on any in-class assignments, (4) effort they put into listening to their classmates, and (5) their effort learning and sharing their opinions and knowledge today. Students are then asked to grade the amount and quality of effort put into preparing for and participating in today’s class from an A to a C. We have found that this encourages students to read before class, as well as to integrate content from the course to other activities outside of class.

In a fifth self-assessment, students reflect upon their preparation for exams by answering a series of questions at the end of the exam. These questions include, “Please grade the amount and quality of effort you put into preparing for this exam from an A to a C” After this initial rating, we ask students, “How did you prepare for this exam?” “How confident did you feel about the content before you took the exam?”, “How confident do you feel now?”, and “How are you going to prepare for the next exam?” (L. J. Lolkus, personal communication, September 29, 2019). In addition to providing feedback regarding how students prepared for exams, this activity provides instant feedback to professors regarding student reactions to the exam. Furthermore, especially after the first exam, this activity helps students take exam preparation seriously.

In the final example of a self-assessment, we ask students to discuss their learning progress across the semester, taking into account an early assignment in which students assess their strengths and weaknesses. In the early assignment, students complete surveys and reflect on their perceived skills and experience. At the end of the semester, we ask students to re-take the surveys and discuss why they saw – or didn’t see – changes in the scores. We also ask them to talk about how their strengths and weakness have changed over the semester, especially when reflecting on the early assignment. After assessing their current strengths and weaknesses, as well as progress across the semester, we also ask students to plan what skills they want to improve upon in the future. This assignment encourages students to assess their own learning and skills and to develop a plan for future self-assessments.

**Session Description**

The session will begin with introductions, identifying whether or not participants currently use self-assessment in the classroom, and an introductory self-assessment activity. After our introductory activity, we will discuss the different types of self-assessment we utilize in the classroom and provide examples of these activities. After describing these activities in detail, we will do a final self-assessment activity with our audience, and conclude the session.

Our proposed schedule is as follows:

1. Introduction (20 minutes)
   1. Facilitator and audience introductions
   2. Importance of self-assessment, session background, and why we became interested in this topic
   3. Introductory self-assessment activity
2. Descriptions of different types of self-assessment used in the classroom along with examples (25 minutes)
   1. Self-assessment quizzes
   2. Grading project drafts and providing feedback to self on those drafts
   3. Team member feedback activity
   4. Exam preparation self-assessment
   5. Participation self-assessment
   6. Assigned reflection as self-assessment
3. Assessment Activity Follow-up (10 minutes)
4. Wrap-up (5 minutes)

**Time Requested**

60 Minutes

**Resources Needed**

Laptop, projector

**Application to Conference Theme:**

We fully embraced the “Innovate & Collaborate” theme as we often draw from other disciplines for classroom ideas. Many of our self-assessment activities come from other domains. Specifically, we collaborated with Nutrition, Statistics, Medievalist, and Rhetoric professors to develop many of the ideas for our workshop.

**References**

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