

## Student Engagement in the Assessment Process

Student engagement in the assessment process is essential to developing meaningful connections between learning and assessment. As teachers and students work together to develop criteria for assessment, student learning increases and student understanding of what the teacher is expecting becomes increasingly clear.

Anne Davies\* states “When the learning destination is clear, it helps learners learn. When we talk about the learning with learners they have an opportunity to engage, to bring prior knowledge to the learning, to feel a sense of ownership, and to be partners in the learning-assessment process.” Teachers are working to increase student participation in assessment by shifting the process from students being test takers to students being active participants in deciding the criteria on which their assessment will be based.

One way teachers are doing this is by sharing the outcomes (goals) for the lesson and allowing students choices in how they demonstrate their learning. Teachers are also collaborating with students to develop their marking criteria before the assignment begins. This process outlines for students exactly what is expected and what they will need to do in order to do well on the assignment.

We asked the students what type of assessments they liked best. This is what they said...

- I do best at assignments and assessments that I can choose because you can show off your creativity and ideas
- When teachers show you how to do something instead of saying just go do it for yourself, I can do much better
- I really like it when they [the teachers] demonstrate with pictures

These students also indicated that assessment of their learning should be as varied as the way that they learn. They said that they ‘learn in many ways – not just the same old, same old. Variety is the key.’ They also indicated that they do much better when they have control over the assignments.

Anne Davies states that ‘Brain research is indicating that closing in on a goal triggers a part of the brain linked to motivation. Learners involved in self-assessment and goal setting in relation to co-constructed criteria learn more.’ Students and teachers are just beginning the journey of collaborative assessment. The goal for everyone – increased motivation, learning and success.

The student responses above come from an interview about learning and assessment completed with students from Arborgate School. Thanks to Matthew Brisson, Brennan Peters, Esther Regier, Emely Wagner, and Alexandra Broesky for sharing their thoughts, opinions and ideas for this article.

\* Anne Davies. “We’re Nomads”, 2009.

