A STRATEGY FOR ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING IN HEALTH SCIENCES

Marthyna Williams (PhD, RN, RM)
Hester Klopper (PhD, MBA, RN, RM)
Daleen Koen (PhD, RN, RM)
INTRODUCTION

Assessment / Teaching / Learning

• Assessment of learning?
  Learning > assessment

• Assessment for learning?
  Assessment > learning

• Assessment as learning?
  Assessment = Learning
  Learning = Assessment
South African educational system

• Change:
  – Traditional content-based approach to Outcomes-based approach (intention = competence)

• Assessment practices: traditional
  – Testing culture
  – Performance measured in percentage
OBJECTIVES

- To explore and describe the assessment practices of the learning facilitators in health sciences;
- To explore and describe the students in health sciences’ experience regarding the assessment practices employed by their learning facilitators;
- To describe assessment from a social constructivist approach to learning, and to
- To describe a culture that will facilitate assessment as learning

In order to develop a strategy for assessment as learning
PROCESS OF CRITICAL ETHOGRAPHY
(Adapted from Carspecken, 1996)

Stage 1:
Primary Record

Sample 1:
Learning facilitators
n=15

Sample 2:
Students
n=30

Stage 2:
Preliminary reconstructive analysis relationships

Data collection
- Observation
- Individual interviews
- Document-analysis

Stage 3:
Dialogical interaction

Stage 4:
Theoretical Framework

Stage 5:
Strategy: Assessment as learning

Data-analysis

Focus groups

Literature

Focus groups (3)

Observation

Literature

Sample 1:
Learning facilitators
n=15

Sample 2:
Students
n=30

Stage 3:
Dialogical interaction

Stage 4:
Theoretical Framework

Stage 5:
Strategy: Assessment as learning

Data-analysis

Focus groups

Literature

Focus groups (3)

Observation

Literature
RESULTS (Summarized)

Observation during contact sessions:
- Informal, formative assessment under-utilized as learning opportunity; Assessment: question / answer.

Facilitators (interviews):
- Assessment is task of facilitator; formal in nature;
- Students learn for assessment purposes;
- Focus: measurement (tests, exams), marks/grades;
- Reality facilitate traditional methods (large groups, expectations, motivational issues).
Students (focus groups)

– Informal, formative assessment limited to homogeneous groups;
– Marks/grades equals success/failure;
– Learn for assessment;
– Traditional practices are questioned re preparation for professional practice;
– External issues hamper learning/assessment (social activities, financial benefits, lack of experiential learning opportunities);
– “Ideal assessment”: principles of constructivist approach.

Document analysis:

– Test & exam papers: lower cognitive skills;
Assignments: higher cognitive skills.
STRATEGIC GOALS: ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING

• To establish learning climate that will ensure assessment that is criterion-directed, valid, fair and transparent;
• To implement a combination of assessment practices for the achievement of academically approved learning outcomes
• To utilize assessment opportunities as learning opportunities and vice versa
• To make provision for the uniqueness and diversity of learning needs and styles;

• To facilitate active participation and accountability for learning and assessment;

• To incorporate experiential learning for professional career preparation;

• To facilitate a mind shift in all stakeholders; assessment as learning;
STRATEGY FOR ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING

Vision
- Life long learning
- Building of society

Values & Principles
- Empowerment
- Critical & innovative thinking
- Personal & professional development
- Flexibility
- Integrity
- Equality
- Respect
- Diversity
- Transparency
- Human dignity
- Freedom of choice
- Accountability
- Self-regulation
- Fairness

Strategy
- Experiential learning for career preparation
- Self-regulation
- Accountability
- Mind shift of stakeholders
- Fairness

Tactical Plan
- Feedback
- “Feed-forward”
- Uniqueness & diversity of learning needs and styles
- Active participation and accountability for learning
- Experiential learning for career preparation
- Multi Methods
- Theory – practice integration
- Focus on learning
- Interaction
- Policy adjustment
- Self, peer- & group assessment
- Participation assignments and scenarios

Learning Climate
- Learning = assessment
- Expectations
- Self-regulation
- Challenging assignments
- Reflection
- Formal & Informal assessment

Combination of assessment practices
- Assessment = learning opportunities
- Diversity
- Flexibility
- Values & Principles
- Self-regulation
- Mind shift of stakeholders
- Fairness

Learning = assessment
- Multi Methods
- Theory – practice integration
- Focus on learning
- Interaction
- Policy adjustment
- Self, peer- & group assessment
- Participation assignments and scenarios
CONCLUSION

A teaching-learning culture to facilitate assessment as learning should contribute to the empowerment and emancipation of health professionals as deep-holistic life-long learners who:

- accept responsibility for own learning, strive for personal and professional competence; and
- are skilful in the art of interpersonal interaction, reflection and self-assessment.
QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU

BAIE DANKIE

VIELEN DANK

Marthyna.Williams@nwu.ac.za