

**TITLE:** Exploring Learning of Assessment during a “Process Based” Faculty Development Workshop

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**ABSTRACT:**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Students and educators value meaningful learning and growth in performances that are relevant to professional practice. Both learning and professional growth are accelerated by effective assessment (Black and Wiliam; ??? Stiggins, ???; Heywood, 2000). Hence, assessment is considered a best practice in education, and the practice of assessment has expanded to many contexts beyond the classroom. Some of these contexts include course assessment, program assessment, and institutional assessment.

In the context of historical development of universities, assessment is a relatively new concept, arising in the early 1970s (Heywood, 2000). Consequently, there is confusion in assessment theory and practice due to inconsistency in the conceptual meaning of words. Here, we follow the concepts and definitions that have evolved over the last 15 years in a professional community known as the *Process Education Community* (cite guidebook). Key definitions:

**Assessment.** The process of analyzing and providing feedback. This feedback can focus on many things including an assessee’s performance, an assessee’s work product, and an assessee’s learning. The primary purpose of assessment is to help the assessee improve their performance, their learning, and their work product. Assessment can be performed by a coach (expert assessment), a peer (peer-assessment), or the assessee themselves (self-assessment).

**Evaluation.** The process of judging or comparing against established standards and reporting the results of this judgment. The primary purpose of evaluation is to inform relevant stakeholders, on the degree to which the standards have been met. The evaluator may be an expert, a person in a power position (e.g. manage), a peer, or the evaluatee themselves.

In the knowledge-base of the *Process Education Community*, assessment and evaluation are different processes. This contrast is described in detail by (cite sb paper). Several of the important ideas about assessment & evaluation are:

- Assessment is for learning and improvement, whereas evaluation is for judging the quality or goodness of something.
- Assessment is for helping the assessee and is based on a trust relationship between the assessor and assessee. To the assessee, assessment feels like having a coach or peer who cares about them, and is providing feedback that helps them improve.
- Evaluation can feel threatening because there may be high negative consequences if standards are not met. Familiar examples of evaluation include taking a final exam, applying for tenure, and submitting a paper to an archival journal.
- Evaluation often impacts the self-worth of the evaluatee. Positive evaluation results can lead a person to feel better about themselves, but also may lead a person to feel relief (e.g

I am so glad that hurdle is overcome). Negative evaluation (e.g. denial of tenure) usually has negative impacts on the evaluatee's self worth.

While most people do not want to be evaluated, evaluation is important and the processes of assessment and evaluation are complementary processes that can work together synergistically so that when people are evaluated, their performance is high and they have clear understanding of what is needed to meeting the evaluation standards. Details of creating aligned assessment and evaluation are presented by (cite guidebook).

When assessment is used in higher education, what matters is the quality of performance. Performance in assessment can span a continuum from ineffective to highly effective. Appendix A presents an instrument that was designed to measure performance in assessment. Here, we define *effective assessment* as performance that scores high (level 3 or above on all rows of the rubric) on the instrument presented in Appendix A.

Regarding assessment, there is gap between the present state in higher education and what is possible. This future state in high education involves a cultural change to arrive at An Assessment-Rich Environment (our label). To understand an assessment-rich environment, most people need to spend significant time in this environment. However, below we provide a brief synopsis:

[**Assessment-Rich Environment.** describe an “assessment-rich,” learner centered, proactive, growth oriented environment, from multiple perspective].

To attain this future state, we need to elevate performances so that many people (students, professors, chairs, administrators, national leaders) have strong performance in assessment. To elevate performances of professionals in the academy, we need to have effective faculty development processes—this motivates the research question.

**RESEARCH QUESTION.** For adult learners who are improving their knowledge of assessment and their ability to effectively assess others (i.e. their performance), what factors or combinations of factors mediate in learning, attitudinal changes, and performance improvements?

#### SUBQUESTIONS

- What challenges or barriers do learners face?
- What are the present cultural norms for assessment practice?
- What would ideal cultural norms for assessment practice be?
- What are challenges to transfer beyond the workshop boundaries?
- What motivates a faculty member to come to a workshop on assessment?
- How does motivation change as a faculty member acquires knowledge of assessment?
- How can extrinsic motivation change to intrinsic motivation?
- What are the key intrinsic long term behaviors?
- What factors of the environment are important?
- How important is practice w/ feedback?
- What is their conceptualization of assessment when they enter the workshop

## I. Context

- a. Research question answered by gathering data at a faculty development workshop, UI, 35?, facilitated by Pacific Crest. The present study uses case study (add), one of the five traditions of qualitative social research (Creswell, 1998; Creswell, 2003.). The study was conducted at the University of
- b. Research Team participated in the workshop while conducting the research study--
- c. Research Team comprised on a engr. manufacturing manager , an operations management specialist with significant experience, and a learning specialists. POVs that are brought by the team
  - i. *Performance is what motivates people. True of students and true of faculty.*
  - ii. *People learn performances best by doing and then receiving feedback*
  - iii. *Focus on people and their learning is key. This leads to results, whereas a direct focus on results usually fails because the people expected to produce the results lack the performances.*

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand learning by professors, researchers have created various theoretical frameworks. Here, we review three frameworks: learning as a process of social participation in a community of practice, learning by an organization, and adult learning.

### A. Adult Learning

Cross (1981) presents the Characteristics of Adults as Learners (CAL) model in the context of her analysis of lifelong learning programs. The model attempts to integrate other theoretical frameworks for adult learning such as andragogy ( Knowles ), experiential learning ( Rogers ), and lifespan psychology.

The CAL model consists of two classes of variables: personal characteristics and situational characteristics. Personal characteristics include: aging, life phases, and developmental stages. These three dimensions have different characteristics as far as lifelong learning is concerned. Aging results in the deterioration of certain sensory-motor abilities (e.g., eyesight, hearing,

reaction time) while intelligence abilities (e.g., decision-making skills, reasoning, vocabulary) tend to improve. Life phases and developmental stages (e.g., marriage, job changes, retirement) involve a series of plateaus and transitions which may or may not be directly related to age.

Situational characteristics consist of part-time versus full-time learning, and voluntary versus compulsory learning. The administration of learning (i.e., schedules, locations, procedures) is strongly affected by the first variable; the second pertains to the self-directed, problem-centered nature of most adult learning.

Knowles' theory of andragogy is an attempt to develop a theory specifically for adult learning. Knowles emphasizes that adults are self-directed and expect to take responsibility for decisions. Adult learning programs must accommodate this fundamental aspect.

Andragogy makes the following assumptions about the design of learning: (1) Adults need to know why they need to learn something (2) Adults need to learn experientially, (3) Adults approach learning as problem-solving, and (4) Adults learn best when the topic is of immediate value.

In practical terms, andragogy means that instruction for adults needs to focus more on the process and less on the content being taught. Strategies such as case studies, role playing, simulations, and self-evaluation are most useful. Instructors adopt a role of facilitator or resource rather than lecturer or grader.

Rogers distinguished two types of learning: cognitive (meaningless) and experiential (significant). The former corresponds to academic knowledge such as learning vocabulary or multiplication tables and the latter refers to applied knowledge such as learning about engines in order to repair a car. The key to the distinction is that experiential learning addresses the needs and wants of the learner. Rogers lists these qualities of experiential learning: personal involvement, self-initiated, evaluated by learner, and pervasive effects on learner.

To Rogers, experiential learning is equivalent to personal change and growth. Rogers feels that all human beings have a natural propensity to learn; the role of the teacher is to facilitate such learning. This includes: (1) setting a positive climate for learning, (2) clarifying the purposes of the learner(s), (3) organizing and making available learning resources, (4) balancing intellectual and emotional components of learning, and (5) sharing feelings and thoughts with learners but not dominating.

According to Rogers, learning is facilitated when: (1) the student participates completely in the learning process and has control over its nature and direction, (2) it is primarily based upon direct confrontation with practical, social, personal or research problems, and (3) self-evaluation is the principal method of assessing progress or success. Rogers also emphasizes the importance of learning to learn and an openness to change.

## **B. Learning by Organizations**

Organizational learning (OL) is an area of knowledge within organizational theory that studies models and theories about the way an organization learns and adapts [copied from web: <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&lr=&safe=off&client=safari&rls=en-us&oi=define&q=define:Organizational+Learning>]

Generally, one can distinguish between two different processes of organizational change that are associated with OL:

- adaptive learning, i.e. changes that have been made in reaction to changed environmental conditions and