Student Beliefs about Assessment: Clues for Improved Outcomes

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Key Educational Processes

- There are options concerning the nature of each of these processes. Differences in conceiving of them leads to differences in intentions, behaviours, & outcomes.
Significance of Beliefs

General Framework

• Icek Ajzen: Reasoned or Planned Behaviour—Beliefs & Intentions relate to Practices & Outcomes
Our research

- Survey instrument based on Teachers CoA
- Secondary school students: NZ
- University students: NZ, China, USA, Brazil, Iran, Germany
- With outcome measures
  - Multiple studies with mathematics and reading
  - Multiple studies with different sets of items
- Draw-a-Picture research in NZ, China, Bahrain
ASSESSMENT
Do a presentation poster
Explaining lots of features
You will be marked

CHILDREN

Caption: They are doing a test to find out what level they're at or what they can do or qualify for and shows your options in life.
Doomed, Stressed, No Study, Panic

Caption: Assessments - first reactions.
Evaluation raises performance
Students’ Conceptions of Assessment

• Students may not see assessment in the same way as teachers because of their different roles and responsibilities

• We have found 4 major ideas
  – Assessment makes Students Accountable.
  – Assessment is Irrelevant, Bad, or Unfair
  – Assessment Improves Achievement and Learning
  – Assessment is emotionally Beneficial
NZ Survey (v5)

N=705 Year 9-10
Mean Strength of Agreement

Mostly Agree

Moderately Agree

Slightly Agree

Mostly Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Improvement

Accountability

Beneficial

Irrelevant

Mostly Agree

Teacher Improves

Student Accountability

School Accountability

Help Class Environment

Personal Enjoyment

Bad

Ignore
Assessment Practices Definition Model

Test-like

Assessment Definitions

Interactive Informal

- The teacher grades or marks or scores the written work I hand in
- The teacher scores me on an in-class written essay
- The teacher grades me on a written test that was written by someone other than the teacher
- The teacher grades me on a written test that he or she made up
- An examination that takes one to three hours

- I score or evaluate my own performance
- My classmates score or evaluate my performance
- The teacher asks me questions out loud in class
- The teacher observes me in class and judges my learning
- The teacher scores a portfolio of work I have done over the course of a term or school year
- The teacher scores my performance after a conference or meeting with me about my work
- The teacher uses a checklist to judge my in-class performance
Beliefs define assessment

- Teacher-Controlled
  - 0.89
  - 0.32
  - 0.33

- Interactive-Informal
  - 0.28
  - 0.14
  - 0.17

- Accountability
  - Student Accountability
  - 0.91
  - School Accountability
  - 0.74

- Improvement
  - Student Improvement
  - 0.77
  - Teacher Improves Learning
  - 0.91

- Affect/Benefit
  - Personal Enjoyment
  - 0.61
  - Class Environment
  - 0.77

- Irrelevance
  - Ignore
  - 0.88
  - Bad
  - 0.86
Beliefs influence performance

- External Factors
- Improvement
- Affect/Social
  - Personal Enjoyment
  - Social benefit
- Irrelevance

Interactive-Informal Assessments
Interactive-Informal Assessments

Test-like Assessments
Math Score
$R^2 = .20$

Correlations:
- .32: Social benefit
- .27: Personal Enjoyment
- .39: Teachers use
- .65
- .82
- .25
Table 4. Relationship Between **Assessment Day Attendance** and Various Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Attended</th>
<th>Did Not Attend</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>t Prob.</th>
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<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCP Score</td>
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<td>4.43</td>
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<td>RTE</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.90</td>
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<td><strong>SCoA-Improvement</strong></td>
<td>38.54</td>
<td>10.50</td>
<td>33.47</td>
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<td>6.53</td>
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<td>SCoA-Affect</td>
<td>20.77</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>19.25</td>
<td>7.31</td>
<td>3.20</td>
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<td><strong>SCoA-Irrelevant</strong></td>
<td>20.77</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>24.02</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>-6.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCoA-External</td>
<td>17.02</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>15.20</td>
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<td>4.70</td>
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<td>SAT-Verbal</td>
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<td>SAT-Math</td>
<td>569.35</td>
<td>66.74</td>
<td>581.62</td>
<td>74.15</td>
<td>-2.29</td>
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</table>
Implications

- Students’ success depends on taking responsibility and being made accountable
  - Students don’t believe in interactive assessments
    - And there may be good reasons in how we do these
  - They trust teacher controlled testing
  - BUT this may be problematic if teachers don’t do it
Implications

• Students’ success depends on using assessment to improve their learning practices
• They need & expect feedback from teachers & tests
• Teachers have to focus on growth strategies
  – Don’t worry so much about their egos and tell them what they expect to hear
Implications

• Teachers and students believe in IMPROVEMENT
• Assessment can contribute if we use it to discover
• WHO NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT WHAT NEXT?