Collaborative Activity Plan & Personal Reflection

Choosing & Implementing an Appropriate Self-Assessment Tool: Activity Plan
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Learning Objective

Given different contexts, group members will demonstrate the ability to choose an appropriate self-assessment and verbally explain the reasoning behind this selection in the main class session.

Learning Activities

1. The instructors will provide a brief PowerPoint presentation related to the assigned readings, with a focus on self-assessment, and the showcase agenda (5-10 minutes).
2. The learners will be broken up into four random groups to go over their assigned case studies (20-25 minutes).
   a. Instructions
      i. Choose your member roles (1-2 orators are appropriate).
      ii. Read the situation below.
      iii. As a group, choose a self-assessment (listed on pages 2-3 in your Google doc) you feel would be most appropriate in this situation.
      iv. As a group, answer the questions below.
      v. Debrief your case, selection, and answers in the main session.
   b. Situations
      i. Jamie is a training specialist at S&J Corporation. He wants to add a new self-assessment to an employee development course titled "Workplace Participation and Teamwork." The course is open to all employees at S&J Corporation and offered three times a year - once face-to-face, and twice in a synchronous, online format.
      ii. Ana is a professor of an online graduate sociology course. She knows that her students are diverse in their educational and personal backgrounds, and wants to use a self-assessment tool that will initiate an understanding of one another.
      iii. Emma is a new instructor at a large public high school. She will be teaching an AP (advanced placement) art history course, and has been told most AP classes are comprised of juniors and seniors, but sophomores are also allowed to enroll. She wants to incorporate a self-assessment tool that encourages self reflection, but also provides some feedback on the course itself.
      iv. George is a career counselor in the Center for Career Development at a public university. He is leading a workshop for admitted, undergraduate students whose majors are undeclared. At the beginning of the workshop, he will have each participant complete a self-assessment.

c. Questions
  i. Why do you think your chosen self-assessment works best for this situation?
  ii. How would you use this self-assessment?
  iii. At what point in time would you assign this self-assessment?
  iv. Would you modify this self-assessment in any way?
  v. (if time allows) Is there another self-assessment you would also choose?
d. Discussed Self-Assessments
  i. Career Cluster Interest Survey
    1. This online survey is from Minnesota State's CAREERwise Education. You select your interests, based on activities, personal qualities, and school subjects, which results in matching career clusters (CAREERwise Education, 2017).
  ii. Critical Incident Questionnaire CIQ
    1. The CIQ is a formative self assessment, that provides feedback on different aspects of the course, personal feelings, and thoughts about others. It was created for face-to-face courses, to be used at the end of each class meeting, but could be modified for online courses, such as a weekly assessment (Palloff & Pratt, 2009).
    2. Also found on pages 31-32 of Palloff & Pratt text
  iii. Graduate Student Professional Skills Checklist
    1. This self-assessment of skills is from the University of Virginia's (UVA) Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs.
    2. "When beginning graduate work, many students find that they do not have the time to focus on their career development or they may find it irrelevant so early in their graduate career. It is important, however, to begin developing skills and practices that will address career development needs from the first day of graduate school" (Career Development, 2017).
  iv. One-Minute Paper
    1. Palloff and Pratt (2009) suggest asking students of online classes questions "at the close of each week's discussion or at the end of each unit" (p. 31).
    2. The two questions comprising this exercise are *"What was the most important thing you learned in this class?"* and *"What questions remain unanswered?"* (as cited in Palloff & Pratt, 1993, p. 31).
  v. Project Implicit
    1. This array of implicit association tests (IAT) by Project Implicit, associated with Harvard University, "measures the strength of

associations between concepts (e.g., black people, gay people) and evaluations (e.g., good, bad) or stereotypes (e.g., athletic, clumsy)" (Project Implicit, 2011b).

2. This non-profit's goal is "to educate the public about hidden biases" (Project Implicit, 2011b).

vi. 16Personalities

1. This website provides free personality assessments, somewhat similar to Myers-Briggs.

2. "We describe how people belonging to a specific personality type are *likely* to behave – however, remember that these are just indicators and tendencies, not definitive guidelines or answers...This information is meant to inspire personal growth and better understanding of others, not to be taken as gospel" (16Personalities, 2017).

3. Everyone will be brought back to the main meeting space to explain their case study situation and report on their decisions and reasoning. Instructors will inform the students on what self-assessment they had in mind when creating the case study situation (15-20 minutes).

Assessment Activity

Assessment will occur during the debriefing of each group in the main session. Instructors will see and hear each group's answers to the questions provided to them, and determine if their choice is appropriate based on the reasoning behind their selection. Instructors will inform the students on what self-assessment they had in mind when creating the case study situation. However, if the students have chosen a different self-assessment and can justify this decision, then their answer will be considered as an appropriate choice.

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Process and Rationale

This showcase was prepared over a time period of three to four weeks. Jill and I met in person three times to plan our showcase activity plan (September 10, 17, and 24), and each meeting was at least three hours long. We also communicated electronically via text, email, and video conferencing.

The week before our first meeting, we tasked each other to complete our assigned showcase readings. At our first meeting, we talked about the readings. Neither of us cared for the *Faculty Focus* piece. However, we did find the Palloff and Pratt readings both useful and interesting. We focused in on the self-assessments. I believe this was partially because everything else we had been reading lately was all about Mager's (1997a, 1997b) instructional objectives and measuring results, which stems directly from a behaviorist's perspective. Neither of us consider behaviorism to be our chosen foundational theory. Personally, I lean more towards social constructivist and cognitivist theoretical frameworks, and I am still learning more about their differences. Even with our personal backgrounds, our learning objective still loosely followed Mager's (1997a) requirements of performance, condition, and criterion.

However, I believe social constructivism is the theoretical lens most predominant throughout our activity plan. For instance, we decided early on to set up randomized breakout groups with each group having a unique case study. Case studies are an example of an authentic learning tool because they simulate a real-world environment and situation (Palloff & Pratt, 2009). Case-based learning is linked to constructivism – an approach in which the learner constructs knowledge in the process of meaning-making and imposing organization on the surrounding environment (Driscoll, 2018; Wilson, 2018). Social constructivism occurs when participants construct their knowledge by engaging in a sociocultural process of learning (Hoadley & Van Haneghan, 2018). Our learners participated in these group-based case studies and class-wide discussion to create their own meaning of our instruction about self-assessment.

Self-assessments and reflective practices are largely used as a form of ongoing formative assessment during coursework, and are also frequently linked to areas such as transformative learning, professional development, and empowerment (Dochy, Segers, & Sluijsmans, 1999; Thorpe, 1995). We chose four unique case study situations in an attempt to reflect some of the different instructional contexts illuminated through research, and to represent the different career pursuits of our classmates. We did not want to provide a narrow example of contexts self-assessments can be used for.

Within their breakout groups, participants were provided instructions, a real-life situation, questions, and reference materials. However, we packaged this information in a format which had not been used in the class before. Our peers are accustomed to collaborative breakout group work while video conferencing, and to establish three roles during this work – a note taker,

taskmaster, and orator. During these activities, the note taker typically shares their screen and individually records information using a software program or an online documenting tool. After the breakout groups return to the main session, the orator waits for the note taker to share their screen to everyone before speaking on the group's thoughts.

This process, which has become commonplace, bothers me for a few different reasons. First, only the note taker has the direct ability to record the group's thoughts and display them visually to the entire class. Second, there is always a time lag deciding which group is going to speak, the note take of that group sharing their screen, and then the orator presenting the information. Third, the other members of the group do not have direct access to the information recorded by the note taker, unless they take a screenshot or request the note taker to email their group document. Because of these reasons, I expressed a desire to Jill to use an online, collaborative tool so each member could access and edit information simultaneously. She believed this was a good idea, and we decided to use Google Docs for the breakout groups. Packaging our breakout group information with an online, collaborative tool afforded our peers the ability to simultaneously access, use, and respond to their case studies.

Objective and Assessment

Based on our assessment, I believe the learning objective for our activity was not only achieved, but actually exceeded expectations. Each group used their unique case study to choose at least one of the provided self-assessments and verbally explained their reasoning behind their selection in the main class session. However, most groups thought of creative ways to use more than one of the provided self-assessments and considered in-depth when they would assign the different self-assessments to be most effective in that particular case study. One group even spent part of their time taking a provided self-assessment to better understand the opportunities and constraints it would provide for their situation.

Future Implications

As a facilitator, I really enjoyed providing an online, collaborative tool to learners for a breakout group activity. The learners also shared positive feedback about using this tool, because they preferred not having to share a single screen. They also thought it was valuable to have information provided for simultaneous use because it provided an opportunity to add notes and use the process of elimination. However, I would really like the ability to use a tool already connected to the learning environment, video conferencing in this case.

If I used this activity in the future, I would change something about our self-assessments, but I am not sure what I would change yet. During the discussion after each of the groups debriefed, the term self-assessment was addressed regarding whether or not some of the "self-assessments" we described and provided were actually self-assessments. To address this issue, I would first do additional research to understand how the instructional design field operationalizes the term self-assessment. If that did not align with this activity, I would either explain the difference during the presentation and provide our operationally-defined definition, or I would replace any misaligned self-assessments. Alternatively, the literature might show a term, such as self-reflection, as being a better fit for this activity.

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Best Practices in Online Assessment

Using Google Docs was a gambit, one that really paid off. It was exhilarating to be able to have an idea, in real-time, where the different groups were at, what their process was like, what they were deciding, etc. We were able to check in on them without disrupting their process and also gaining more information than if we were visiting virtually from group to group. Doing something that had not previously been done in our class was a challenge for me. I believe this reinforces the idea that it is okay to break the mold in online assessment if you understand what is typically done and why, and if you are able to provide logical reasoning behind your decision.

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