

Inviting Risk in Creating Sustainable and Authentic Assessments in Teacher Education

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Scholarly Area: Curriculum development

Format: Provocation or open dialogue

Questions:

- What assessment types are suitable for preparing pre-service teachers for the place of work?
- Can authentic and sustainable assessments contribute towards preparing pre-service teachers for the workplace?
- Does assessment promote development of students' capacity to make judgements about their own work throughout their programme?

Graduate employability is a concern in the Higher Education space (Cranmer, 2006) and we consistently ask of ourselves if we are adequately preparing students for the place of work. There is an expectation that the Education Graduate is 'profession ready' and equipped for the complexity of classroom work (Wyatt-Smith, 2009). This presentation considers how sustainable and authentic assessments can prepare pre-service teachers for the school, classroom and contribute towards their employability. Mtawa (2021) states that employability needs to be reflexive, a transformative process, cultivate agency and allow graduates to make a meaningful contribution to society. Acknowledging Mtawa, allows for space to engage in re/thinking our assessment practices and the implications thereof in teacher education.

An exposure to risk.

Authentic assessment is closely linked to the realities of the student's field of experience, in this case the practice teaching sites. Gronlund (1998:2) explains that it pertains to tasks from daily life, such as problem solving. Authentic assessment is where students try real-world applications of what they are learning. This type of assessment is closely linked to formative assessment or assessment for learning and the student is seen as an active role-player in the assessment process. Through students' involvement in this process, they are encouraged to reflect in order to take responsibility for their own learning. Authentic assessment therefore provides a more comprehensive picture of the student's growth and progress. In order for assessments to be sustainable it requires a 'double duty' as stated by Boud (2000). It should teach the student beyond the course, for future learning and develop the ability to make informed judgements about their own work.

Intentional risk to produce change.

This presentation will consider if assessment tasks in teacher education can transcend the lecture theatre towards the classroom. Examples of the assessment tasks will be shared to support the implementation of sustainable and authentic assessment practices as a pedagogical tool and centering assessment as learning. Above all this conversation would like to suggest that assessment can be the start to students developing a sense of judgement in their own learning and capabilities (Boud, 2007).

Risk an act of bifurcation

The preparation of students through assessments for the place of work can be considered taking a risk. According to Bialostock (2015) the place of work is forever changing, and uncertainty will always reign. Risk in this presentation assumes a positive position and draws on the work of Gert Biesta (2020). He makes the point that there is risk in education because it is about human beings meeting each other and trying to live lives well. Acknowledging risk in my teaching is important because it allows for possibilities and to engage in conversations that reframe assessment in learning.

References

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