Programmatic Assessment: What is Possible in Pre-Service Teacher Education?

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Aims

Within the context of 21st century learning (OECD, 2020) and new standards for pre-service teacher education in Ireland (Céim, 2020), the aims for this project include:

➢ To identify opportunities for integrated, holistic and programmatic approaches to assessment in preservice teacher training.
➢ In partnership with students and colleagues, to pilot programmatic assessment with reference to one course and one student cohort.
➢ To evaluate student and faculty experience and responses to this process.

Findings

This project is beginning its journey. It is anticipated that findings will:

➢ Audit the range of existing assessment practices used in preservice education programmes.
➢ Report on current student/graduate and faculty experiences of assessment and feedback.
➢ Develop, pilot and evaluate a model of programmatic assessment for one student cohort for Spring Semester 2022.
➢ Review student and faculty experience of the pilot project.

The methodologies utilised in this study and underpinning the findings will be mixed with an emphasis on eliciting authentic learner voice. To that end, Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly) and specifically repertory grid technique will be used, alongside other methods, to elicit the understandings, perceptions and experiences of students on assessment.

It is anticipated that the project will also record the journey undertaken. To maximise the impact of any project undertaken, it is likely that it will be crucial to align and build effective teams around shared objectives and align teams to wider goals and objectives within MIC. To truly maximise the impact of this project, it is anticipated that there will be a need to engage stakeholders, respond to stakeholders needs and manage expectations. The development and maintenance of strong working relationships will be key and may be a longer lasting gain in such a project. Creating conversations, space to work with others towards a shared goal, participating actively, sharing responsibility and recognition and contributing to MIC at a systems level will be important.

References

Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education (2020) The Teaching Council.
Kelly, G. (1955) *The Psychology of Personal Constructs*, New York: Norton.
OECD (2020), *What Students Learn Matters: Towards a 21st Century Curriculum*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/d86d4d9a-en.
National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (2016) *Some Key European and National Teaching and Learning Policy & Practice Documents,* Teaching & Learning National Forum.
Pete (2016) *Assessment of, for and as, learning: an international perspective.* In: Learning Innovation Network (LIN) and Student Led Learning (SLL) Symposium, 27 October 2016, Dublin, Ireland. (Unpublished)

Impact

It is envisaged that this project will be impactful in:

➢ Extending and broadening student and faculty understanding of assessment functions and practice.
➢ Identifying the opportunities and barriers to adopting programmatic assessment.
➢ Identifying CPD requirements for students and faculty.
➢ Potentially identifying possible models of assessment and feedback for institutional applicability.

Impact is best realised when change processes occur. To maximise the impact of this project, it is envisaged that there will be additional benefits engendered by the process i.e. it is hoped that there will be the fostering of an environment of experiential learning, contributing to a culture that embraces change and improvement alongside contributing to a culture of innovation. Dissemination of process to reflect project journey and participation in conferences, publications and shared professional collaborations are also envisaged as potential indicators of impact.

On the need for a Programmatic Approach......
(T & L National Forum 2016)

Progression Challenges: Irish Context in Last 4 Years

Assessment Progression Challenges
- Lack of clarity of assessment purposes
- Assessment load
- Students' lack of empowerment
- Low range of assessment methods
- Disconnected assessments
- Need for a programmatic approach

Feedback Progression Challenges
- Poor understanding of nature and meaning of feedback
- Feedback too late for change
- Students' low engagement/empowerment with feedback
- Need for a programmatic approach

(See National Forum 2016: *European and National Policies*)