

Self and Peer Assessment – by Dylan Wiliam Video Transcript

When we started working on formative assessment, or Assessment for Learning, as it's sometimes called, we were focusing very much on feedback. So we started with feedback 'cause that's where the research was most clearly organized. We then realized that in feedback, unless you asked the right question, the answer wasn't very helpful - so questioning and feedback came into the equation together. As we worked with teachers to implement this in classrooms, we discovered you couldn't change what the teacher was doing without changing what the students were doing, and, in particular, the importance of student self-assessment - what we sometimes call activating students as learners of their own learning... and peer assessment, or what we sometimes call activating students as teaching resources for one another... assuming a much greater salience.

Now, when we talk about peer assessment, a lot of people just assume we are talking about having kids marking each other's work so that the teacher doesn't have to do it, and people always get the wrong idea because that's summative peer assessment. What we've discovered is that formative peer assessment, where students are helping each other improve their work has benefits for the person that receives feedback but also has benefits for the person who gives the feedback. Because in thinking through what it is that this piece of work represents and what needs to happen to improve it, the students are forced to internalize a success criteria and they're able to do it in the context of someone else's work, which is less emotionally charged than your own. So what we routinely see... we see very, very commonly is when students have given feedback to others about a piece of work, their own subsequent attempts at that same work are much improved because they're now much clearer about what good work in that task looks like. So that's been one of the real, I think, breakthroughs... is the real benefit of peer and self-assessment, is both the person who is doing the assessment, the self-assessment and the person who is giving feedback - the peer assessment.

We see students being very, very effective commentators on each other's work, giving very, very sound advice. Sometimes a lot harder than the teachers would give – one of the things you would see quite routinely in classrooms is children being much tougher on each other than the teacher would dare to be because of the emotional relationships and the power relationships there, but actually they are generally, and pretty much, spot on.

Source: The Journey to Excellence 2012

<http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk/videos/expertspeakers/selfandpeerassessmentdylanwiliam.asp>