



Assessing Students' Work Habits

How student self-assessment can help you assess non achievement-related skills

In reference to the article ***Straight to the Source: Student self-assessment of learning skills and work habits***

By Stefan Merchant

DISCUSSION LEADER CHEAT SHEET: 3 key points from the article

5 minutes

AIM: TO INTRODUCE THE SESSION AND TODAY'S THEME: **STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT**

- 1 Teachers often struggle to complete non student achievement-related assessments and frequently have little evidence on which to base their ratings of students' work habits. As constructs such as collaboration, responsibility, and organization are difficult to observe and therefore difficult to assess – especially among a class of 20 or 30 students – research demonstrates that teachers often rely upon their holistic judgment of the student, which is unreliable.
- 2 When trying to assess skills such as self-regulation, researchers most often rely on self-report instruments, which are useful measurement tools as they access respondents' internal thought process – which makes them ideal for classroom assessment of work habits. In the classroom, this is called “student self-assessment,” which recognizes that students have important things to say about their own learning.
- 3 As students (especially younger ones) are often not accurate reporters of their own skills – either overestimating their abilities or giving themselves low ratings – it is necessary to co-create with students definitions of the skills being assessed to achieve common understanding, including what differences in skill levels look like. This improves students' self-assessments and helps them to develop an accurate self-concept where they are not only privy to the teacher's rating but also the rationale behind them.

DISCUSS

20 minutes

AIM: TO GET EVERYONE SHARING THEIR THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS

The discussion leader can choose 2–3 questions from the list below or integrate questions of their own.

- ? The author shares his own experience as a teacher where he could rigorously defend his grading decisions when it came to tests, quizzes, and assignments, but he had no idea what he was supposed to be doing when completing the “Work Habits” section of student report cards. **What do you typically consider when assessing students' work habits, and have you encountered any challenges similar to those of the author?**
- ? The author states that while teachers use self-assessments to prompt students' reflection on their learning and to improve metacognition, they rarely use these self-assessments in report cards. **Have you ever conducted student self-assessments, and what determined whether or not you used the results of these assessments in your report cards? If you have never conducted student self-assessments, what could explain why teachers rarely use these results in their report cards?**

- ❓ **Have you ever trained students on how to self-assess, and how did it go? If not, could you think of a reasonable way to integrate this type of discussion into your lesson plans?**
- ❓ **Responsibility, organization, collaboration, initiative, and perseverance are listed as types of skills that fall under “work habits.” What are some other skills or work habits that you and your students could assess together, and how would you define and assess those skills alongside your students (e.g. what are some ways you could train students to distinguish ‘excellent collaboration’ from ‘good collaboration’)?**

DO IT

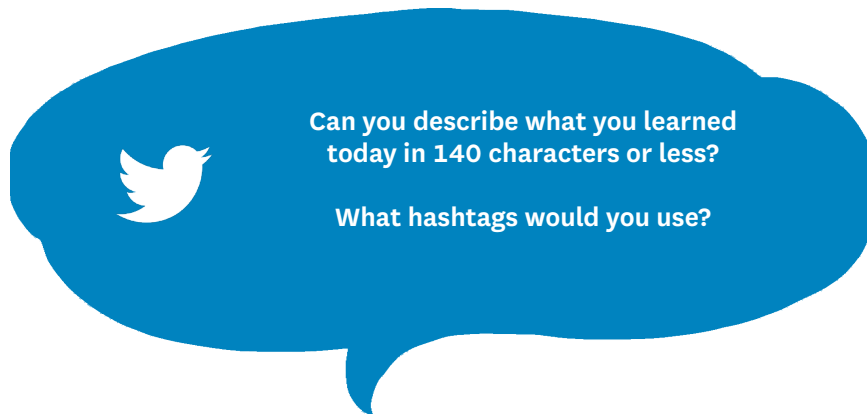
15 minutes

AIM: TO UNDERSTAND WAYS TO FACILITATE STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

⚙️ Discussion leader instructions

Invite each group member to write down (or type into their mobile phone if they have Twitter) a fictional (or real) Twitter post in 140 characters or less (or 25-30 words) using the prompt below.

- + **OPTIONAL:** *Group members can use the hashtag #EdCanLearning to share their learning with our online community of practice.*



Share back and display

After 2-3 minutes, invite the group to read out their tweets. Support the group in thinking about ways they could integrate this brief exercise, or something similar, into their daily practice to encourage students to self-assess their learning (e.g. what other prompts could be used with students to help them identify their successes and challenges? How could this information be collected and used for assessing work habits?).