

Reflections on the Assessment Task

Assessment of learning:

1. Task and topic interesting (can also be linked to in-class activities)
 - about TV advertisements: a pop medium not too high-brow but full of idols students adore, involving 4 language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, accessible to teenagers due to its low cost (TV sets in most households). For example, a weaker student expresses he likes the topic.
2. Roles in the task within teenagers' experiences (achievable and relevant task)
 - teenagers organizing activities at school have to really decide the adjudicator criteria for their teachers, the task is within their realm of experience and therefore meaningful.
3. Task is deliverable and manageable
 - the task demands the students to reach some sort of consensus, creating a common platform for students to interact meaningfully. Choices are debated and the number of criteria is not too big to allow escape (only 4 criteria). Students have to reach compromises which demand a lot of turn-taking strategies. Built-in conflicts are limited
 - eg. Ethical and commercial considerations, the strongest student can spot the conflict.
4. Task allows communication in mixed-ability groups
 - the task gives hints for discussion but the hints are not too specific. Students are only given general aspects which allow flexibility in the discussion. There is also an element of details – the percentages of each criterion – allowing students to revisit their own discussion and establish coherence of their 4 choices. Unfortunately the students have not been strong enough to compare more critically the importance of their choices, thus failing in really deepening their discussion.
5. Accurate assessment of learning
 - In the teacher feedback, each student can assess his/her own performance accurately, proving that the assessment task allows them to look at both his/her own strengths and weaknesses, not only displaying the former or the latter.
 - eg. The weakest student can critically evaluate himself by saying that he has better pronunciation than another student and that he speaks louder and more clearly too.
 - eg. A strong student can see her weakness – not able to initiate.
 - eg. Another strong student can see her strength: that she can persuade others to accept her ideas and knows she must have been convincing to get such support.
 - eg. Another weaker student can see his limitations in vocabulary, pronunciation and ideas.
 - of course, this assessment task is conducted when the students are very tired – at the end of a school day, so, Lai who should have 3-4-3-4 generally (according to my assessment of his general standard), have a 3-3-3-3 on the basis of this assessment task. Others have marks very close to their general standard, so, one or 2 marks differences do exist.

Assessment for learning (Formative side):

1. Students have already taken this first step in further improvement – knowing where they stand. It's proved in the teachers' individual feedback, each student knows very well their own strengths and weaknesses.

2. The teachers' feedback is conducted individually so that each student is given ample time and much room to reflect on their performance. Based on their reflection, the teacher can see how to correct misconceptions for their class. If Carolyn thinks she is successful just because she sees everyone agreeing with her, she is led to understand the importance of turn-taking strategies like clarification, asking specific questions, rephrasing which can draw others out more, and will improve her management skills for her exams as well as her career later in life. The written feedback reflections from students themselves sum up the most salient areas for improvement.