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THE USE OF LEARNING JOURNALS AS ASSESSMENT

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It is now widely understood that assessment practices have a key influence on learning. Summative assessment tends to have a damaging effect overall and in particular on learners' self-awareness and deep engagement (Harlen & Deakin Crick, 2003). This research concerns the use of learning journals for the assessment *of* learning (summative), *for* learning (formative) and *as* learning, developing further the concept of *educative assessment* (Povey & Angier, 2006).

The project falls within an action research paradigm with elements of an auto-ethnographic approach. The participants were graduates in other disciplines studying mathematics for a year at undergraduate level to prepare for initial teacher education. The project was inspired by an article about using learning journals with secondary pupils (Coles & Banfield, 2012) - 'one of the things we were most struck by was the power of these journals in supporting pupils to revisit and take on their work in a manner that seemed to provoke new learning and awarenesses' (p11). Students were given a scrapbook at the beginning of a pure mathematics module. The format was chosen to encourage informality, personalisation and freedom in the students' responses. The teaching of the module was interspersed with 'scrapbook sessions' where scissors, glue and other materials were provided and students reviewed and extended their learning; these sessions were supplemented by substantial amounts of independent out-of-class work by the students on the scrapbooks. The scrapbooks were submitted throughout the module whenever an individual chose for formative feedback - "post-its" attached to their work - and finally for summative assessment.

Data for the study comprises the journals themselves and written reflections from and interviews with the participants. Initial analysis indicates that the journals were highly effective in eliciting an awareness of and engagement in learning through the students choosing what to include, articulating what had been achieved and assimilating and responding to the formative feedback.

References

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