

Assessment for productive learning: Forms of assessment and their potential for enhancing learning

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It has become fashionable in the literature on assessment to highlight the importance of “assessment for learning” and counter pose it against “assessment of learning” as though one form is intrinsically better than another. It can easily be acknowledged that there are different purposes of assessment (for example making decisions about selection and progression, providing feedback that will enable students to improve their learning, helping teachers to improve their instruction). These different purposes might dictate certain forms of assessment, but this should not mean that different forms of assessment need to neglect the learning potential that so many scholars and practitioners have seen in the assessment process.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the learning potential of different forms of assessment, irrespective of the purpose for which the assessment is being conducted. From this overview, a holistic “learning model” of assessment will be developed to demonstrate how classrooms, schools and systems might take advantage of learning opportunities provided by all forms of assessment. .