Learning to Learn

Learning to Cook

The F-Word: Feedback

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Welcome!

About the Authors
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We are both full time, BA Joint Honours Students, at Northumbria University in the School of Health, Community and Education Studies. Liz is studying Care and Education with Childhood Studies and Nick is studying Professional Practice Studies with Childhood Studies. In the second year of our degree we both chose 'Assessment for Learning' as an Option Module as we aspire to become primary school teachers. For this reason we decided that this was an important module as Assessment for Learning is about how each individual learns successfully in their own way.

One of the most important features of Assessment for Learning is feedback. Here are a few examples of our ideas about feedback: we hope you enjoy them. We have presented our ideas in the style of a cookbook, in which we substitute advice about improving your learning with advice about learning to cook. We hope you find this a fun, enjoyable way to understand the role of feedback in Assessment for Learning!

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Introducing Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning can be a complex philosophy to understand as it incorporates many ways of learning. It outlines what the best approaches to learning are and challenges unsustainable approaches to learning. It outlines how facilitators of learning (Head Chefs) should cater for learner's needs and how they should encourage deep and meaningful approaches to learning. It promotes autonomous learning, actively engaging students in tasks, so they see a point in the activities they're doing. Assessment in assessment for learning looks at how assessment aids a learner and how it can help them to decide what they want to do next and what they want to achieve. Assessment for learning is the tray on which your lecturers serve good, quality education!

A recipe for AfL

Ingredients, you will need:

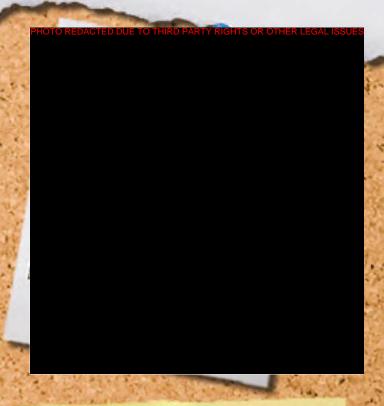100g Understanding of assessment for learning

100g Questions you may have

75g Relating this to your own experiences

50g Patience if you do not fully understand

50g Knowledge of how you can apply assessment for learning in your own learning

25g Insight into how you could describe this to others
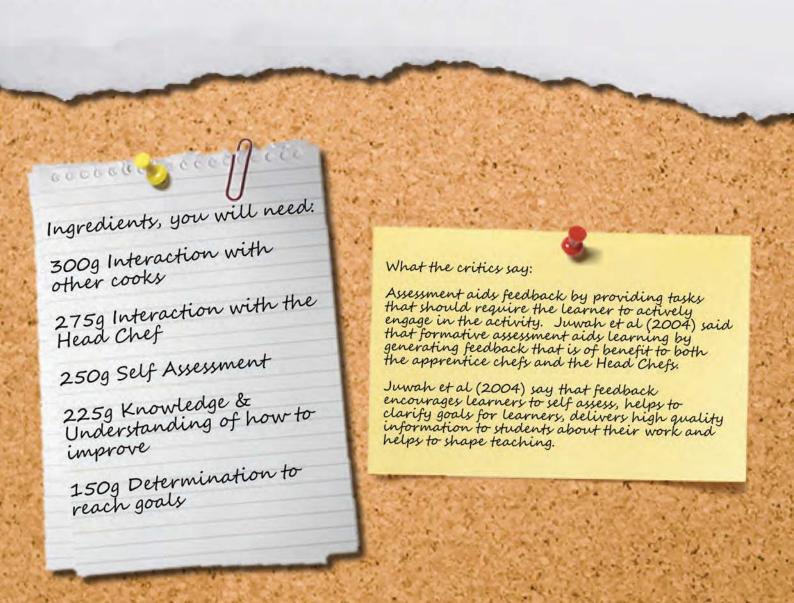
What the restaurant critics said:

Havnes (2004) highlights the importance of thinking about the impact of assessment on learning in a wider sense, by focusing on how assessment drives not only student learning, but also the teaching practices, the designing of education programs and the production of learning material.

How are you doing?

Continuous Feedback throughout learning to cook!
Feedback & Dialogue

Feedback is an important process throughout learning to cook. It outlines areas to improve and how to move forward. Feedback helps you assess how your cooking is going. This helps you build and develop important skills, such as analyzing, synthesizing and creative skills. It gives you a better opportunity to be a competent cook, developing sustainable skills which you know how to implement in all areas of learning.

Nicol, (2008) tells us that dialogue is an important part of this process. Feedback is not a one way transmission process. Feedback is also given on a daily basis in working environments like kitchens, through conversation and interactions with other people's ideas and opinions. This helps you, as a cook, to judge your own food as you are making it.

Ingredients, you will need:

300g Interaction with other cooks

275g Interaction with the Head Chef

250g Self Assessment

225g Knowledge & Understanding of how to improve

150g Determination to reach goals

What the critics say:

Assessment aids feedback by providing tasks that should require the learner to actively engage in the activity. Juwah et al (2004) said that formative assessment aids learning by generating feedback that is of benefit to both the apprentice chefs and the Head Chefs.

Juwah et al (2004) say that feedback encourages learners to self assess, helps to clarify goals for learners, delivers high quality information to students about their work and helps to shape teaching.

Taste as you make

Assessing your own food and finding out what your fellow chefs think!
Self & Peer Assessmnet

Great cooking can be achieved by learning to cook with friends. Cooking with friends as fellow chefs can be an enjoyable social experience, give you constant feedback and you can cook up some great fun! Gibbs (1995) tells us that involving friends is likely to make you figure out strengths and weaknesses and this helps develop your judgment.

Friends can help you to improve your cooking by giving you advice and letting you know what they think. When offering your feedback to your fellow chefs on the taste of their food and how they've gone about making it, always be kind and constructive. As Boud, (1997) suggests, your friends might feel quite sensitive about their lovely creations!
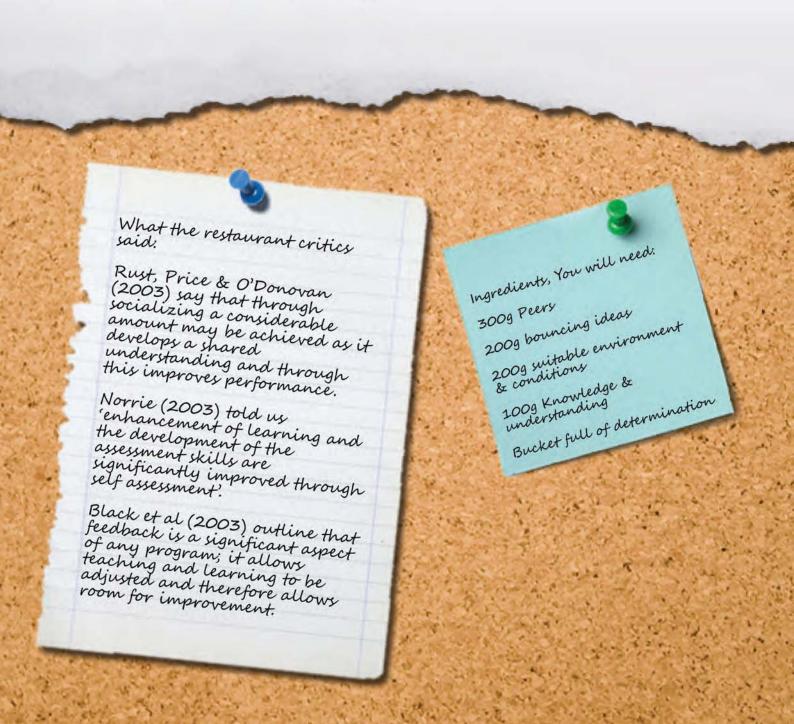
When learning to cook it is important to always think of the teaching and learning approaches of the chef that wrote your recipe book. Some chefs say follow the recipe to the letter, some say it needs adapting. Your aim, though, is to follow the criteria for the recipe and figure and out what methods suit you best.
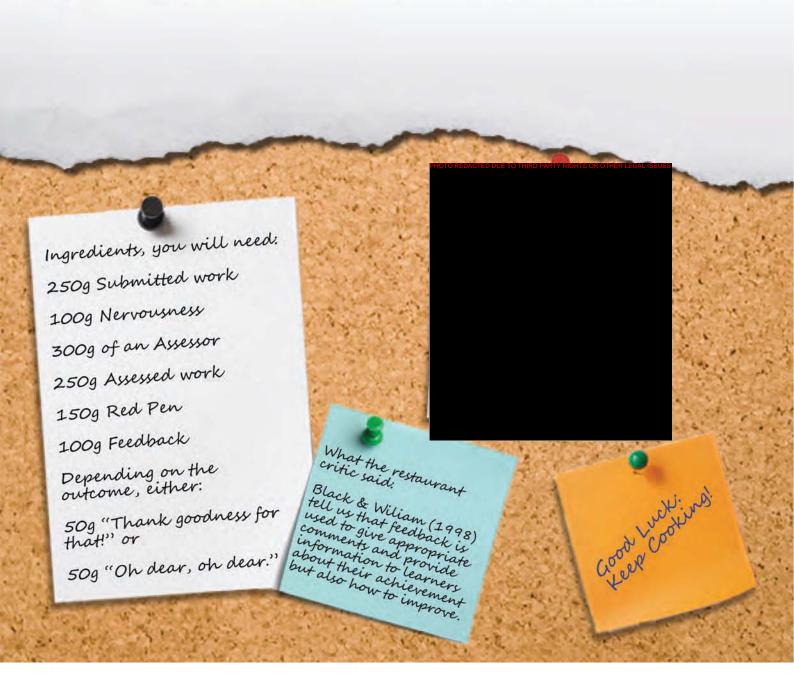
Taste as you make

To make something tasty, you need to identify standards and be able to make judgments about the extent to which you can meet these criteria and standards (Boud, 1995). Feedback helps you to self assess how good your cooking is. Boud (1995) thinks that self assessment is a practice to engage in as well as a goal to aspire to.

What the restaurant critics said:

Rust, Price & O'Donovan (2003) say that through socializing a considerable amount may be achieved as it develops a shared understanding and through this improves performance.

Norrie (2003) told us 'enhancement of learning and the development of the assessment skills are significantly improved through self assessment'.

Black et al (2003) outline that feedback is a significant aspect of any program; it allows teaching and learning to be adjusted and therefore allows room for improvement.

Ingredients, You will need:

300g Peers

200g bouncing ideas

200g suitable environment & conditions

100g Knowledge & understanding

Bucket full of determination

This is the part you have been waiting for! Your training throughout was to impress your connoisseurs the restaurant critics: now you find out how you've done. Gaining this type of formative feedback can be a great thing, but as Boud (1997) says, feedback may sometimes be unpopular or a devastating thing, depending upon the feedback received. Try to make positive use of it though, as it will offer you some helpful insights which might improve your already gained ability by showing you what you are doing right and what parts need improving. Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall and Wiliam (2003, p.1), have noted that 'Learners need feedback in order to learn!'

Feedback is a main theme in learning to cook, then, as it will develop the would-be chef understandings and help address any problems which need to be resolved so that they can develop their learning in the future. Think of a restaurant critic's feedback as feedforward (Carless 2007). This will enable you to make the same dish or similar dishes even tastier next time.

Ingredients, you will need:

250g Submitted work

100g Nervousness

300g of an Assessor

250g Assessed work

150g Red Pen

100g Feedback

Depending on the outcome, either:

50g "Thank goodness for that!" or

50g "Oh dear, oh dear."

What the restaurant critic said:

Black & Wiliam (1998) tell us that feedback is used to give appropriate comments and provide information to learners about their achievement but also how to improve.

Good Luck:
Keep Cooking!

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