Chapter 12
Student Participation in Assessment Processes:
A Way Forward

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ABSTRACT

The participation of students in higher education assessment processes has been proven to have many benefits. However, there is a diverse range of techniques and options when implementing participative assessment, with each offering new possibilities. This chapter focuses on the topic of student participation in assessment processes, and it explores the main stages when it can be developed: participation in design, during implementation, and in grading. This chapter also considers the different modalities that can be used, especially self-assessment, peer assessment, and co-assessment and the three stages that characterise them. Finally, it analyses three experiences of student participation in higher education assessment, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. These experiences show how participative assessment can be developed in everyday classes, in groups, or individually and how participative assessment can occur in different class settings. They also demonstrate the importance of design, assessment literacy, and some difficulties that might appear during the process.

INTRODUCTION

Students have been objects of evaluation in traditional assessment approaches; they have been those who have received the actions of others without themselves being considered as active agents in the process. This perspective makes students' continuous learning more difficult because it does not prepare

students to make complex judgements and decisions in the uncertain context that they will encounter in the future (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). Indeed, student involvement in assessment-related actions, including designing instruments, deciding on the assessment criteria, assessing tasks, qualifying processes or products, and providing feedback on performance, gives students the opportunity to work on and improve abilities such as reasoned decision-making, creativity, and problem solving (As demonstrated in Gómez, Rodríguez & Ibarra, 2013).

This chapter discusses different approaches, modalities, and experiences that involve university students in the assessment of both their own performance and assignments and those of their peers. The manner in which student participation is implemented has its own benefits and disadvantages, and it should always be kept in mind that greater participation in the decision-making process during assessment facilitates self-regulated learning to a greater extent than low participation (Nicol, 2007; Orsmond et al., 2013).

To this end, when designing their courses, teachers should always take into consideration that 'implementing participative strategies, in which the voices of students are encouraged and considered, requires effort from both lecturers and students. For lecturers, this effort mainly involves planning and design. As far as students are concerned, participative assessment requires a greater amount of time and effort than non-participative assessments' (Quesada, Rodríguez & Ibarra, 2016, p.49).

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Modalities of Assessment

For a long period of time, assessment at the university level was conceived solely in terms of assessment performed by faculty members. However, involving students in the assessment of their learning is a growing trend. Indeed, promoting student participation in the assessment process is now part of the assessment policy in universities (Rodríguez, Ibarra & García, 2013).

Student participation in the assessment process might be constrained to performing an assigned task. In contrast, it might be assumed to be an extended practice that includes students in the decision-making process with regard to the most important aspects of the assessment process, from the design of assignments to the provision of feedback. A wide range of alternatives can be found between these two positions.

In general, it can be claimed that student involvement can be integrated at any time in the assessment process. Furthermore, this process can be divided conceptually into three distinct stages or steps (Rodríguez, Ibarra & García, 2013):

1. **Involvement in the Assessment Design**: This stage includes negotiating the evaluation approach and the various aspects of planning, including the assessment criteria, the assignments to be completed, the agents responsible for their execution, the instruments to be completed, and the weighting of the grades.
2. **Involvement in the Implementation of the Actual Assessment:** At this stage, depending on who assesses and who is assessed, up to four modalities of assessment can be identified. These modalities are detailed below.
3. **Involvement in the Grading Process**: In this last step, the information provided by those in charge of the assessment is reflected in the final grades obtained in the subject.

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