Self-assessment in Self-Directed Learning: Can we trust it? Do we have a choice?

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See? Here it is in the dictionary.

Man! And I was so sure I was right! I just knew it!

I have bad news.

Being totally right and being dead wrong feel the same.

Nah, that's just other people.
Overview

• Self-assessment theory and research
• Self-assessment and self-directed learning
• Implications for continuing professional development
How would you rate your ability to get along with other people?

A. Much better than the norm
B. Better than most
C. About the same as everyone else
D. I have issues with people in general
How many state capitals can you name?

A. All 50
B. 40 to 50
C. 30 to 40
D. 20 to 30
E. 10 to 20
F. Fewer than 10
Which of the following problems is easiest for you to solve:

A. Fixing an internet connection that won’t work
B. Advising my best friend on relationship problems
C. Planning for retirement (soon!)
D. Selecting a better play than the coach just called
E. Organizing a dinner party for 10 guests
Self-Assessment Process

- Metacognitive judgment of some aspect of self
  - Potential (knowledge, ability)
  - Reality (performance)
Self-assessed performance vs. Actual Performance.
Logical Reasoning Study

Performance Quartile

Actual
Ability
Test Performance
Self-Assessment: College Students

- **Self-Rated Athletic Ability**
  - 60% “above average”
  - 34% “average”
  - 6% “below average”

- **Self-Rated Leadership Ability**
  - 70% “above average”
  - 28% “average”
  - 2% “below average”

- **Self-Rated Ability to Get Along with Others**
  - All respondents rate self at least “average”
  - 60% rate selves in “90th percentile and up”
  - 25% rate self in the “99th percentile”

College Board Survey 1976-1977
Self-Assessment: Faculty

- Among college professors, 94% say they do above average work.
- 68% rated themselves in the top 25% for teaching ability.

Cross (1977)
SA Research Findings

- The number of studies do not reflect educational significance of phenomenon
- Low SA validity and accuracy in most studies
- Different raters use different criteria for assessments
SA Research Findings

• Self-assessment of knowledge less valid than self-assessments of performance
• Global self-assessments reflect stable personality dimensions & self-concept rather than assessments of skill, knowledge, or performance

Gordon (1991)
The Double Burden

- Difficulty in produce correct responses (cognitive tasks)
- Difficulty in recognizing when accurate judgments have been made (meta-cognitive tasks)
- Individuals with a lower IQ rate selves as more intelligent than those around them

(C. L. Downing)
SA Research Methods

- Problems with group-level analyses
  - Assumption that every individual in the group is comparable in self-assessment ability
  - Ignores individual differences
Do self-assessment abilities vary with individual characteristics or task characteristics?

- SA accuracy does not appear related to:
  - Academic performance
  - Ethnicity
  - Gender
  - Academic background or preparation
- Accuracy MAY be slightly higher with more familiar tasks, but this is ambiguous
How does clinical experience influence the development of self-assessment?

- Early experience may increase confidence faster than it does competence
How stable are self-assessment abilities over time?

- Comparable to stability of actual performance
- Suggests it is an individual characteristic
Do self-assessments influence subsequent self-regulated learning?

- SA influences SRL in different ways for individual students
- SA influenced by SRL in expected direction (generally)
- SA accuracy, per se, may be less important than the behavioral consequences of self-assessment
Summary

- Students vary widely in the accuracy of their self-assessments
- Self-assessment accuracy appears to be a stable characteristic of the individual
- Early experience may decrease accuracy by increasing overconfidence
- The relationship of self-assessment with self-regulated learning is complex and individualistic
Self-Assessment and Self-Regulated Learning

• If self-assessment generally inaccurate, why bother with it?
• Because self-regulated learning depends on it (at least in part)
Why Should We Care?

- Role in education
  - Motivation for learning
  - Development of metacognitive skills
  - Source of educational problems
Why Should We Care?

• Role in practice
  • Error detection and correction
  • Information-seeking and decision support
  • Augmenting knowledge and skills
  • Professionalism, self-monitoring and self-management
  • Source of complacency
Self-Regulated Learning

• Three elements
  • Controlling available resources (time, learning sources)
  • Controlling self-efficacy related to learning
  • Controlling cognitive learning strategies

Pintrich (1995, 1999)
Dynamics of Self-Assessment

- Knowledge
- Feedback
- Self-Concept
- Social Judgment

Self Assessment
Interpreting Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stable ability</th>
<th>difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>effort</td>
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</table>
From SA to SRL

- **Feedback Negative Outcome / Intrinsic Attribution**
- **Feedback Positive Outcome**
- **Feedback Negative Outcome / Extrinsic Attribution**

Possible SRL

No SRL

Self-Assessment
From Possible to Actual SRL

Possible SRL

Important/Urgent

Estimate of Success

SRL?

- - No

- + Maybe

+ - Maybe

+ + Yes
From SRL to Behavior Change

SRL → Seek Information Source → Evaluate → Adopt → Incorporate

Seek Information Source → Evaluate → Start Over or End

Start Over or End → Incorporate

Evaluate → Start Over or End

Start Over or End → +

Incorporate → +

Adopt → +

Evaluate → -

Start Over or End → -

Seek Information Source → +

Repeat or End → -

SRL → +

Evaluate → -

Repeat or End → -

SRL → +

Start Over or End → -

I incorporate

Seek Information Source

Evaluate

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Implications

• Self-assessment and SRL needs to be viewed as an individual rather than group characteristic
• SA accuracy may be largely irrelevant
• Need for studies of self-assessment and self-regulated learning in actual practice
Implications

• Educational interventions that impact SA and SRL
• What is the relationship of SA to the larger issues of professional- and self-identity
Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel’s as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
And foolish notion.

*To a Louse* -- Robert Burns