Building partnerships within the curriculum

Key Words

collaboration, identity, feedback

Abstract

This presentation discusses the pivotal role that the introduction of an early assessment 'literacy' task has had on developing an ongoing collaborative partnership that makes the curriculum the explicit medium for developing academic literacies and professional identity, as well as being the vehicle for traditional 'content delivery' (Lea & Street, 2006; (Wingate, 2006). The task forms part of a year long, first year academic development program, collaboratively designed by an ALL lecturer and lecturers from the Bachelor of Sport Coaching. The program has developed over a four year partnership. The collaboration has opened new ways to understand and support Sport Coaching students' engagement and transition into and through their degree (Engestrom, 1987, 2007; Macdonald, Schneider, & Kett, 2013). The task, a coaching philosophy, offers a multidimensional approach to assessment for learning.   Although initially designed to provide authentic samples of student writing when our institution was attempting to assess early literacy skills, students reported they were using their philosophies in Curriculum Vitaes and job applications. This information inspired us to create digital portfolios for students to document the development of their coaching philosophies across their degree, with the expectation that on graduation the philosophies will form part of a professional portfolio (McGladrey, Murray, Hannon, 2010). Developing coaching philosophies from the beginning of the course has been invaluable for both students and ourselves as educators. Student evaluations indicate that developing the philosophy has been a highly valued assessment task. The philosophy is used to gain greater understandings of our students' experiences, motivations, and learning needs; while developing critical and reflective thinking, the capacity to blend macro and micro practice concepts and begins the process of developing a professional identity (Northedge, 2003). From our perspective, the philosophy assists us in better understanding students as individuals and learners. The whole-group and individual feedback processes we employ increase our confidence that students are provided with meaningful opportunities to develop their academic, professional and disciplinary identities (Chandrasoma, Thompson, & Pennycook, 2004).

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