

# ECER 2010 Helsinki

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## Proposal Information of Contribution 550

### 22. Research in Higher Education

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### The participation of university students in assessment: An international perspective of students and teachers in higher education

As expressed by Boud (2007) "the great innovation in assessment in the 1960s was the introduction of ideas from educational measurement. This was important then as it made assessment thinking more systematic and introduced terminology, such as reliability and validity. It also introduced new techniques such as multiple-choice tests. In the 1970s, the distinction between formative and summative assessment was introduced. In the 1980s, the value of self and peer assessment was accepted. In the 1990s, the consequences of assessment for student learning were recognized. Just because an assessment activity satisfies some technical measurement requirements doesn't mean that it has a worthwhile impact on what students learn and how they go about approaching their learning."

One of the directions regarding innovation in higher education (Boud, 2006) is involving students in the assessment process. Boud expresses that the current society is requiring graduates capable of planning their own learning as the base of both a lifelong autonomous learning and the development of a critic and innovative thinking. The democratization of education, as Sanmartí (2002) manifests, implies new challenges for teachers. To enhance learning of university students we need to know their "logics", their difficulties and the problems they come with during their learning process. It is also important that students recognize these difficulties to be able to overcome them. Consequently, a new assessment culture is needed, in which assessment tasks are learning tasks. Universities must, therefore, consider new assessment strategies. Authors such as Bordas and Cabrera (2001), Biggs (2003), Falchikov (2005) or Carless et al. (2006) have been promoting alternatives to traditional assessment, which are the object of study and analysis of others (Ibarra and Rodríguez, 2010).

As Carless, Joughin & Mok (2006) expressed "assessment processes should involve students actively so as to promote the kind of dispositions they need to be lifelong learners"

In this paper we present the results about a research funded by AECI (Spanish Agency for Cooperation and Development – Ref. A/016477/08) where seven universities have participated: Universidad de Cádiz (UCA - Spain); Universidad de Antioquia (UdeA - Colombia); Universidad Nacional (UNA - Costa Rica); Universidad Nacional Pedagógica Francisco Morazán (UPNFM - Honduras); Universidad de Sevilla (US - Spain) and Universidad de San Carlos (USAC - Guatemala).

This research has been designed to achieve two aims:

- To analyze the perspective of university students about their participation in assessment.
- To analyze the perspective of university teachers about the participation of students in assessment.

### *Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used*

This research is based on two surveys with the participation of 3,459 students and 424 university teachers.

The structure of both questionnaires used (one for students and one for teachers) are similar. They are divided in two essential dimensions: 1) Involvement in the assessment design and 2) Types of participation.

In the first dimension (assessment design) the aim was to know the opinion of teachers and students about different aspects such as: the way in which the assessment criteria are established, students' involvement in the assessment design and type of feedback and feedforward given.

The second dimension was related to the types of participation such as self-assessment, peer-assessment and co-assessment.

### *Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings*

Regarding how to establish assessment criteria most of the teachers and students agree that it would be positive if students were involved in the decision on assessment criteria. However, there are disagreements between them concerning the type of information that teachers provide about these assessment criteria and whether students' proposals are taken into account.

About the assessment design most students consider that they are not actively involved when deciding the assessment object, the assessment tools to use or the tasks to develop. This opinion is shared by the teachers, who consider that students shouldn't participate in these specific topics. Students also express their dissatisfaction regarding the information given on assessment. There is a disagreement between teachers and students responses about the feedback and feedforward given.

In general, the responses confirm that participative assessment (such as self-assessment, peer-assessment or co-assessment) is rarely used.

The results demonstrate the need to establish formative actions for both students and teachers to get to know and put in practice assessment practices that improves the students' involvement. EvalFOR research group (<http://www.uca.es/evalfor>) is currently working in a research Project (Rodríguez, 2008) in which different instruments and ICT tools are designed to facilitate participative processes through the use of MOODLE or LAMS.

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