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The Role of Assessment Feedback in Developing Students' Academic Buoyancy

**Rick Millican,
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BESA Conference
Liverpool Hope University June 2017**

Structure

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- Why we carried out the research
 - Our theoretical framework
 - Our research questions
 - Changes to practice
 - Phase 2: Our Data Collection
 - Our preliminary findings
 - Questions?

Why do the research?


High NSS score for our Education Studies course in 2015. However, analysis of the feedback showed lower scores for assessment and feedback

Desire to explore this so conducted a small scale piece of action research to improve practice

Phase 1 completed & paper submitted January 2016. Resubmitted June 2017


Phase 2 data collected..... now on to analysis

Academic Buoyancy



According to Martin (2013), academic buoyancy is the ability to deal with ‘everyday setbacks’ and ‘hassles’ and refers to all students whereas academic resilience refers more to the few who may suffer more extreme adverse circumstances who may be the ‘hard to reach’ students.

Dialogue




Effective feedback can be used to encourage self-efficacy and self-regulation which in turn can enhance learning. Assessors need to develop a *dialogic tone* in their written feedback

Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick (2006)

Scaffolding of learning

Bruner (1978)

Research into practice



'theory-practice conversations'
McAteer (2013:12)

Improving the democratic nature of teaching
Elliott (2015)

Changes to Practice

Skills sessions – explicit focus on academic buoyancy and the ‘big five’



1. Demonstrate an internal locus of control
2. Understand the grade
3. Look forward
4. Look to improve
5. Be action-orientated

Changes to Practice

Feedback practice – change to feedback sheets



Clearer grade descriptors

Section for strengths

Section for recommendations


Section for student action points

Changes to Practice

Students bring action points to personal tutor meetings



Phase 2: Working Research Questions

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1. What is the impact of the new practice on students' perceptions of the value of the revised assessment feedback process?
 2. How does this relate to their academic development, their emotions and their overall satisfaction with the BA Education course as a whole?
 3. How does knowledge of the 'Big 5' support students' Academic Buoyancy?

Phase 2: Data Collection

Focus groups

Individual interviews



Emerging findings...

Are indicating that students:

- have found the changes useful and find the Big 5 helpful.
- feel that the 'strengths' section is really important and helps to manage the process.
- value the holistic approach where dialogue is supported and encouraged
- feel the relational aspect of the course ethos makes a real difference to their academic buoyancy.
- However, students observe that there are inconsistencies between the markers



Questions?



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