



## Talking for Learning: The Professional Discussion as a Summative Assessment

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### Abstract

*It is well recognised that assessment design is a significantly important part of learning with authentic, meaningful assessments being associated with positive and fruitful learning experiences (Brown, 2005; Carless, 2017). Assessment methodologies within higher education have evolved to focus on the value of the assessment for the learner, with the concept of assessment for learning now considered as one of the key goals of the assessment process. There is a vast array of assessment methods used within higher education that can be employed to facilitate a student centred experience and it is the reflective evaluation of the 'Professional Discussion' assessment method that provides the focus for this paper. A Professional Discussion is an assessment that affords opportunities for meaningful and rich discussion between a student and an assessor; it is a two-way conversation that provides a platform for the knowledge and understanding of the learner to be explored. Based on discussing previously completed activities, the Professional Discussion facilitates critical reflection and evaluation of the learning taken from these activities and as such, is ideally placed for those engaged with work based learning. This paper sets out to explore how and why a Professional Discussion was designed as a summative assessment for teaching staff engaged as students on a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP) programme of study, including an overview of the value added by engaging in this type of assessment. The logistics of designing and implementing the Professional Discussion as a summative component of the PgCAP are described alongside an evaluation of the experience of delivering this assessment method. Reflecting on the both the preparations for the Professional Discussion and the experience of acting as assessor, the paper provides an insight into the strengths, challenges, and opportunities afforded by the assessment. While the concept of assessment for learning is primarily focused on the quality of learning opportunity for the student, this paper concludes that engagement with the assessment method of the Professional Discussion also resulted in valuable learning opportunities for the assessor themselves to gain their own meaningful and authentic learning.*

*Keywords: Assessment, learning, higher education, discussion.*

#### References:

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