SYDNEY TEACHING COLLOQUIUM 2014

Research and evaluation

Dialogic Concept Mapping: Feedback for Learning and Feedback for Teaching

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Abstract
The potential of feedback in promoting effective student learning has been well articulated and plays a critical role in assisting students close the gap between current and expected understanding, clarifying misconceptions and identifying flaws in learning strategies and skills (Sadler, 1989). However, it is frequently reported to be inadequate in helpfulness, timeliness, consistency, specificity and clarity and remains a perennial source of discontent among students who seek helpful dialogue about their progress (Bailey & Garner, 2010). Here we demonstrate how a dialogic concept mapping (DCM) process can be used to integrate teaching and assessment to both validate assurance of learning and provide feedback. The feedback was frequent and delivered in manageable chunks allowing greater scope for students to understand and achieve improvement. A series of student developed concept maps were assessed for both structure (concept selection and linkages) and for relevance to the discipline, assessment task and for linguistic acceptability (linking phrase analysis). The primary feedback mechanism was based on the peer group (cohort) showing a student’s mapped response relative to the mapped responses of the cohort presented as a composite map of all responses. These maps were overlaid on an expert map (red lines) developed by the instructor for the assessment task (see Figure 1 where numbers shown on link represent number of students making that link between concepts from the total cohort of 100 students). As the assessment task was iterative, students were encouraged to engage with teaching artefacts and further dialogue to clarify misconceptions and refine their understanding. The process also provided feedback to instructors as to the level of comprehension exhibited by students of specific teaching artefacts as well as providing information to guide future instruction.

The use of DCM allowed the contemporaneous validation of curriculum management, teaching proficiency and cognitive progression and retention. During the presentation participants will be
introduced to the DCM methodology for assessment and will be invited to draw an expert map in real time from a typical assessment question. This will allow participants to identify and understand the discourse pathway (similar to that shown in red lines Figure 1) and threshold concepts embedded in assessment tasks.

**References**


**Theme**

Approaches to assessment that demonstrate how students can use feedback for future learning (theme 4)