

# Student Engagement and Student Self-assessment: The REAL Framework

Geoff Munns and Helen Woodward  
University of Western Sydney

## Introduction

This article proposes that there are strong theoretical and practical connections between student engagement and student self-assessment. The idea is that deeper levels of student self-assessment are critical aspects of pedagogical processes aiming to encourage students to be substantively engaged in their classroom learning experiences. This argument was developed in the Fair Go Project, action research into student engagement among low SES primary school students in Sydney's South West<sup>1</sup>. The project establishes links between student engagement and student self-assessment within a particular conceptualisation of the relationships students have with schools and education.

There are two main sections to this article. The first outlines the theoretical underpinnings of the Fair Go Project and highlights the links between student engagement and student self-assessment. The second introduces and describes the *REAL* student self-assessment framework, discussing how it has been developed and is being tested empirically in the project.

## The Theory

### Student Engagement

Drawing primarily on work within the sociology of education, the Fair Go Project (henceforth FGP) brings into play a number of key intersecting theoretical and practical frames concerning student engagement.

The first is that a distinction needs to be made between *procedural* and *substantive* forms of student engagement. Procedural engagement sees students as being on task and complying with teachers' wishes and instructions. Substantive engagement understands that engagement is a sense of satisfaction with, and a psychological investment in the classroom work being undertaken. The latter should undoubtedly most interest educators concerned with improved educational outcomes for their learners. Defining substantive engagement has been an important aspect of the theoretical work of the FGP. The first part of this process was problematising student compliance. It was a risky step given that classroom management issues inevitably dominated the thoughts and practices of the teachers the project was working with. However, student compliance was seen to be a pedagogical outcome that held no guarantees for enhanced academic and social outcomes. Furthermore, there was compelling research evidence showing that low SES students shaped classroom practices by resisting high level tasks and complying with low level tasks (see Jones,

---

<sup>1</sup> The research Fair Go Project has involved more than 10 schools. These are all located within Sydney's South-West region. Nearly two million people live in this region, many of whom are from diverse cultural backgrounds, including the largest concentration of Aboriginal people in the country. The communities the project's schools serve are characterised by substantial numbers of people from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Families live either in cheap private housing or in the countless public housing estates throughout the area. The region has high levels of unemployment with youth unemployment a particular problem. Infrastructure such as public transport and community services have been historically lacking in comparison with more affluent areas. The schools are familiar with the emotional, social and financial stresses associated with socio-economic disadvantage and are also faced with the challenges of high student mobility, negative media attention and with improving student outcomes to levels comparable to their more advantaged peers. All schools have significant numbers of beginning teachers. The schools are also characterised by high family expectations of school and education, and many have a history of positive and productive home-school relationships. The teachers involved in the project have high levels of energy, commitment and enthusiasm for student success. They work in co-researching partnerships with university researchers. See Munns, 2004, and Fair Go Team, in press, for a more detailed overview of the project.

1989, Haberman, 1991, Munns, 1996 and Munns, 2005). The FGP calls substantive engagement small ‘e’ engagement (‘e’ngagement). This is defined as a multidimensional construct: the simultaneous coming together of the cognitive, the affective and the operative at high levels. This view was both influenced by, and contextually reshaped the research literature. Most definitions of student engagement describe its multifaceted nature, typically thought of as cognitive, emotional or behavioural (Fredricks *et al.* 2004). The cognitive and emotional aspects of engagement were accepted by the FGP, though “affective” was considered to offer a clearer pedagogical focus for teachers (see below when engaging practices are discussed). Changing behavioural to “operative” recognised not only the rejection of student compliance discussed above, but also a central research argument that for low SES students to be beneficially engaged, they need to be highly operational learners. Operative again provided a stronger pedagogical and outcome focus for both teachers and students. The definition means that when students are strongly engaged they are successfully involved in tasks of high intellectual quality and they have passionate positive feelings about these tasks. Viewed in this way engagement is much more than students simply being on task and complying with teachers’ wishes and directions.

The second frame of interest to the FGP is another level of student engagement: big ‘E’ engagement (‘E’ngagement). This is that longer and more enduring relationship with schooling and education that is rejected in large numbers by students living in poor communities. ‘E’ngagement is a commitment to education: the belief that “school is for me” (McFadden & Munns, 2002). The FGP believes that these two levels of engagement are dialectically linked. Its position is that small ‘e’ngagement is embedded within big ‘E’ngagement and this provides an important opportunity for classrooms to become critical sites where the immediate educational experiences build to a future-oriented consciousness that sees education as a resource to be profitably employed within students’ lives. Viewed in this way, the argument is that there is a temporal relationship between these levels of engagement. It is useful to conceptualise this embedding of the two levels of engagement as “the future in the present”.

At a classroom level there is a third theoretical frame that speaks to these links and this has become central to the research of the project. Engagement (at both levels) is a consciousness and an educational identity significantly influenced by teachers’ three message systems: curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices (Bernstein, 1996). Since both ‘e’ngagement and ‘E’ngagement are internal feelings, there is an argument that it is the students’ internal processes that are crucial. This is the case even though the catalysts for engagement may be substantially through external classroom practices and discourses (learning experiences and discussion and reflection on those learning experiences).

### **Classroom Messages and Discourses of Power**

The three theoretical frames around student engagement provide a distinct research focus. Early work in the FGP aimed to explore what constituted quality teaching for students in low SES contexts. This had been influenced by seminal research into “authentic instruction” (Newmann and Associates, 1996) and “productive pedagogies” (Hayes, Lingard and Mills, 2000). At the same time as these ideas were directing classroom research, emerging data across the whole FGP project began first to suggest, and then later to confirm, that there were differences in classrooms across the multiple research sites. Students were showing signs that they were becoming more ‘e’ngaged. These signs included being more focused on learning experiences and increasingly sharing these experiences outside the classroom with friends and parents.

The FGP then hypothesised that these signs of ‘e’ngagement were influenced by the messages delivered through the changed classroom pedagogies. The hypothesis was developed through an analysis of what were the key pedagogical differences in the research classrooms and how this contrasted with the general school experience for low SES students. Both the theoretical and empirical investigations opened up opportunities for the project to explore the links between classrooms and the wider dimensions of social power.

These connections between classroom practices and discourses with wider societal structures were conceptualised to turn on the temporal concept of the future in the present: the small ‘e’ engagement embedded in the big ‘E’ engagement. The central notion is that while students are processing and taking up

positions within the powerful school and classroom message systems (curriculum, pedagogy and assessment) they are also negotiating with their teachers “discourses of power”: knowledge, ability, control, place and voice. Issues such as –

- o what counts as knowledge and who has access to really useful knowledge?
- o who has ability?
- o who controls the teaching space?
- o who is valued as an individual and a learner?
- o whose voice is given credence within that space?

- all influence the way teachers teach and how students see themselves as learners. Again, to generalize across the group, the research literature shows that the common and recurring result of these negotiations for low SES students is that they are receiving disengaging messages (see for example, Connell, White and Johnston, 1991).

### **Interrupting the Discourses of Power**

If many students from low SES backgrounds are continuously receiving disengaging messages, then the research data was indicating that there could be, and needed to be, interruptions to the discourses of power. The central research question of the FGP research then sharpened its focus to how might decisive pedagogical changes turn disengaging messages into engaging messages for low SES students? This involved a consideration of how this is made possible within changes to classroom practices and interactions (discourses) on both sides of the teacher/student classroom relationship.

Again, research data was suggesting that there were two significant aspects of the pedagogical changes that were dual key vehicles through which these messages are carried that can powerfully interrupt the discourses of power. These are:

- o classroom learning experiences designed to be high cognitive, high affective and high operative (that is, planned to target definitions of student engagement)
- o classroom processes designed to encourage enhanced reflective processes across the learning community (the “Insider Classroom”).

The “Insider Classroom” concept came about through the ways the project was defining the kinds of classroom learning communities that would foster student engagement. Drawing on the critical literacy literature the following definitions were used to help think about the kinds of highly engaged learners the project wanted in classrooms:

... finding ways of enabling and encouraging learners to enter into communities of practice, discourse and inquiry ... to become an ‘insider’ in the culture of the classroom (Durrant & Green, 2000, p.103);

... involves becoming identified *and* identifying oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group ... playing a socially meaningful ‘role’ within that discourse community (Gee, 1990, p.143).

Classroom observations and theoretical investigations (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2002, on self-assessment; Cazden, 2001, on classroom discourse; Dweck, 1999, and Hattie, 2002, on teacher feedback) saw the development of an interactive framework that constituted the key elements of an Insider Classroom. These were: student community of reflection, teacher inclusive conversations, teacher feedback and student self-assessment<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> See Munns, Woodward & Koletti, 2005, for a more detailed discussion of the Insider Classroom Framework.

This article now moves to a discussion of the importance of student self-assessment within the framework and then through to the place of student self-assessment in classroom pedagogies intended to encourage the kinds of student engagement discussed above.

### **Student Engagement and Student Self-Assessment**

The pedagogical focus on the Insider Classroom calls for a distinct way of considering the relationship between student engagement and student self-assessment. Indeed, the proposal of this article is that for students to be substantively engaged then it is vital that there is a classroom philosophy of individual and collective student self-assessment. There are three reasons for this.

First, this will allow opportunities for the students to share with each other and their teacher their thoughts and feelings about their learning at cognitive, affective and operative levels. Our argument here is that this is a critical classroom element that will move students closer to engagement. It achieves this by directly involving students in processes that emphasise and encourage engaging discourses of power around what they are learning (knowledge), what they are achieving (ability), the sharing of their pedagogical spaces (control), their view of themselves as learners and the say they have over the direction and evaluation of their learning (voice).

Second, and importantly, self-assessment can provide critical feedback to teachers about whether students are engaged. Perhaps this is the only way that teachers will know. Since both 'e'ngagement and 'E'ngagement are internal feelings, they are difficult (arguably impossible) to discern by looking for external signs alone. There is an internal-external tension concerning the encouragement and recognition of student engagement. McFadden and Munns (2002), in discussing student engagement, student self assessment and the social relations of pedagogy, recognized this:

It is the students themselves who will be able to tell us that they are engaged and who will say whether education is working for them in a culturally sensitive and relevant way ... It is at the messy point of teachers and students responding to each other culturally in relation to classroom discourse and assessment practices where we are truly going to see whether or not students feel that school is for them.

Third, the connection between student engagement and student self-assessment can be extended in another salient way to do with our understanding of the position and processes of student self-assessment in classrooms. We want to put forward that there is an intriguing parallel in the internal-external tension in the ideas and processes of student self-assessment and student engagement. Both at a theoretical and practical level student self-assessment is often seen as a set of tasks to be completed by students in order that they make an appraisal of their learning (Hart, 1999; Bryant & Timmins, 2002). Of course student self-assessment has a task component that can be set and monitored externally. But it can be much more. If we are interested in substantive and long-term student engagement then the proposal in this article is that there is a need seriously to consider the processes within student self-assessment tasks. In short, we need to focus on the internal processes: the ways of encouraging students to think about learning within a particular classroom philosophy.

Within this orientation our view is that we can get to the heart of the links between student engagement, classroom pedagogies, student learning experiences and high performance learning. One way of viewing these links is in the alignment of assessment, curriculum and pedagogy (Bernstein, 1996). When it is recognised that this alignment has to work from both sides of the teacher-learner equation then self-assessment becomes a key. The recognition of the value of self-assessment and the necessary interrelatedness of quality pedagogy and high performance learning are well documented (Newmann, 1998; Cumming & Maxwell, 1999; Black *et al.*, 2002). Furthermore, the literature consistently points to the importance of peer group interaction (Mercer, 2000, Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif & Sams, 2004) in the development of students' understandings. There are also convincing arguments to suggest that in classrooms where students are scaffolded to strive towards mastery (as opposed to performance) learning orientations and supported towards appropriate self-evaluations then they are constructively involved in the development of competence even from the earliest school ages (Butler, 2004).

In bringing together concepts around student engagement, quality pedagogy and student self-assessment, the FGP research hypothesised that if the aim is for students to be substantively ‘e’ngaged in high level learning experiences, then reflection has to be extended to deep-thinking conceptual planes where the cognitive, the affective and the operative become one. The empirical work then became focused on how student self-assessment could evolve further towards a vital pedagogical activity, instrumental in improving learning and teaching and changing the whole context of the classroom. The result of this research is the *REAL Dimensions of Student Self-Assessment* (**R**eflective **E**ngagement: **A**uthentic **L**earning). The development, form and implementation of this framework are now described.

## **REAL Dimensions of Student Self-Assessment**

### **The First Framework**

The REAL framework takes a qualitative and formative approach to student self-assessment. Inspired by Biggs’ Solo Taxonomy (Biggs, 1995), it is intended to be used as a heuristic through which teachers can enhance teaching and learning by encouraging students to move through deeper levels of reflection.

There has been an evolutionary process to its development. The first step was in the investigation of the interrelationship between student engagement and student self-assessment. This took place in a number of classrooms in one of the research schools. Using an action co-researching methodology, students were introduced to self-assessment processes (for example, large and small group discussions and the compiling of learning journals). Data was collected through observations, interactions with the students and analysis of their written reflections.

The action phase of the research began in a Year 4 classroom (learners generally in the 9 to 10 years age group). The teacher began by encouraging the children to be part of the learning process by giving them opportunities to make decisions about the context of their learning and propose processes whereby designated outcomes could be achieved. The research focused on the involvement of children in authentic decision making within the classroom and accessing their thinking about their place in the learning framework. One of the first issues that arose was the necessity for the children to have the vocabulary to enable them to talk about both the curriculum and about their learning. They needed reflection opportunities for the children that allowed them to talk about their learning. Children were given post-it notes to write under one or all of the following headings:

- What I learnt
- What I liked
- What I didn’t like
- What I want to know.


The post-its were then placed on a chart under these headings. Other children were then able to muse about the responses and eventually the responses were entered into an assessment journal. As the children became more relaxed and more familiar with the process, the entries became more expressive and assisted both the teacher and the children to understand better the learning that was accomplished and how they could build on this learning for the future. During this period of time it was noticed that the language the teacher used assisted the children to re-focus their work from trying to please the teacher to doing the best they could to master the task criteria. He encouraged students to make judgments about their work and continually opened up discussions about learning by working outside the teacher default discourse of initiation-response-evaluation (IRE: Cazden, 2001). The issue of teacher discourse increasingly became a focal point for our classroom investigations.

After a period of ten weeks research observations were showing that the children seemed to be merely “going through” the process of reflection. They did as they were asked and they complied with the teachers’ requirements. Ironically, their compliance in their self-assessments became the sort of stances that we had attempted to overcome as we started the project: students going through their classroom paces without involvement in their learning processes. At the same time the research team was also becoming dissatisfied with the one-dimensional nature of the reflective probes. There was a

recognition that we needed to design ways of encouraging the students to think more deeply about their processes of learning and the relationship between reflection and engaged learners. It was at this stage that we started to focus on the possibility of a framework that would help us see beyond the basic level of self-assessment. Biggs' (1995) *SOLO Taxonomy* opened the discussion and later became the foundation of our thinking. Biggs put forward the idea that assessment items should be designed in such a way that the assessment product revealed different levels of understanding. The *Solo Taxonomy* is a systematic way of increasing the structural complexity of learning and assessment tasks through unistructural, multistructural, relational and abstract sequences. Drawing on the *Solo Taxonomy* a multidimensional self-assessment framework (figure 1) was developed. It had two aims and associated features. The first was to capture the multidimensionality of 'e'ngagement: the research team wanted students to reflect on their learning within cognitive, affective and operative domains. The second was that we wanted to move those reflections to higher conceptual levels as a way of encouraging stronger 'e'ngaged learners. Biggs' (1995) *SOLO Taxonomy* was used to shape these ascending levels. Basic to this framework was the belief that engagement occurs when there is the powerful coming together of high levels of the cognitive, the affective and the operational. The framework is read from the bottom to capture and simulate the reflections moving to higher conceptual levels.

Figure 1 - Dimensions of Self-Assessment (the basic framework)

Dimension	Affective	Cognitive	Operative
<b>Conceptual-</b> translating into concepts			
<b>Relational-</b> relational to other areas/processes			
<b>Multidimensional-</b> content plus process			
<b>Unidimensional -</b> content - basic			



At this time, these ideas around student self-assessment under development in the FGP research began to be more widely taken up. A group of schools focused on student engagement using the FGP pedagogical changes (discussed above). Data about impact on students was gathered through teacher and student interviews. It became apparent in these interviews with teachers that to put this framework into practice, they felt they needed to be given examples of questions that could be placed within each dimension. Subsequently, members of the research team developed different categories of questions and reflective prompts. The different probes cut across and overlaid the dimensions with the intention to cover many of the types of reflective prompts that could be used in student self-assessment processes. The categories of probes were

- o Thinking about achievement
- o Looking for evidence
- o Working with other people
- o Overcoming barriers
- o Reframing the task.

#### Factors Impacting on The Latest Version of the Framework

This initial version of the framework was implemented in a number of research schools and this implementation led to further development of the REAL framework. Teachers in the research schools chose to investigate the model in terms of their perceptions of children's learning. Subsequent meetings and workshops brought forward data that assisted in the exploration of self-assessment, its function within the

classroom community and relationship with student engagement. It became immediately apparent in these workshops that teachers brought a variety of understandings to the model and therefore interpreted it in many ways. This was noted as an issue but emphasised the need for flexibility and varied expectations in regard to implementation of the model. A number of further implementation factors and experiences then moved the REAL framework to its current stage. These are now discussed in turn.

The first was the need to show teachers the kinds of “lateral” probes that would encourage high levels of reflection. By lateral is meant the kinds of probes that move students into new ways of thinking about their learning. Initially, there was a view that if teachers understood the concept of the framework they would be able to develop their own probes. When it was seen that this process needed to be scaffolded for the teachers, a series of uncategorized probes was developed by the research team from the literature on student reflection (see for example, Hart, 1999) and research experience in schools. These probes were chosen as interesting and different ways to prompt student reflection. Initially, these questions were left as a list for teachers to select from when they were working with the children’s self assessment. However, while they were seen as valuable, they were not placed into appropriate sections of the framework. Rather, they were used independently and therefore did not contribute to the areas and levels of reflection the research was working towards.

The second factor that emerged was concerning the dimensions themselves. While it was continually emphasised that they were not hierarchical, some teachers saw that the students had to progress from unidimensional to conceptual, and therefore students could not progress from one to the other unless they had mastered the previous stage. This meant they felt that having established the foundational unidimensional platform (“what did I learn”, “what did I like” and “what did I do”) they moved to the multidimensional (“how did I learn”). The teachers discovered that this was an extremely difficult concept for the students to articulate. After some discussion it was resolved that they should try a different entry into this dimension, namely, “what did you do”, “how did you do it”, then “how did you learn those things”. That is, there was a subtle but significant shift to a focus on learning processes. Though difficult, this dimension was seen to be very important within the engagement-student self-assessment interplay. After all, the FGP acknowledges that learning the right answers will get students through certain aspects and stages of school but learning how to learn was more critical for ‘E’ngagement and life-long learning. It was also found that some students could more easily understand the relational stage before they understood the multidimensional stage. This reiterated the understanding that the model does not always have to operate in a rigidly hierarchical manner.

The third research issue concerned the understanding of higher order concepts. While the notions of ‘what I learnt’ and ‘what I did’ were considered important concepts to be established, it was discovered that some students (particularly five and six year olds) did not find it easy to communicate them. Most of them could point to a ‘smiley’ face to indicate what they liked but further question revealed (not surprisingly) that this response was more to do with pleasing the teacher or how they felt at the time. As a result some teachers working in the project developed and introduced activities and games that helped students develop a language about their feelings associated with different classroom learning experiences.

The fourth research factor was the difficulty that teachers had in developing probes for the affective dimension. Again, while the initial stages (like? dislike? why? why not?) were relatively easy to establish, trying to extend to ideas of higher order emotions proved more difficult. Believing in the importance of reflections in this area, teachers set about ensuring they included situations where different emotions were explored and articulated. The students found talking about what they learnt at this level was challenging. Many of them had never thought about it, and so again, many different kinds of activities were devised that gave the students opportunity to talk with others about their achievements<sup>3</sup>.

As these challenges were being faced, there was an increasing belief about the potential this framework had for further development of children’s learning. At the same time the research team moved to a

---

<sup>3</sup> See Munns, Woodward & Koletti (2005) for a more detailed description of the activities and games designed to assist learners respond to probes across all levels and dimensions of the emerging framework.

concentrated focus on learning in a public housing estate school<sup>4</sup>. The school was a particularly important research site as these kinds of estates are characterised by very high levels of student disengagement. If the framework contributed to higher levels of student engagement in such a challenging context, then its potential would be substantiated. The research process was to work with the teacher and the students, implementing and evaluating engaging pedagogies and student self-assessment processes. On weekly visits the research team co-planned with the teacher, observed the children during class, and continually talked to them to assist them in their thinking about their own learning. The classroom teacher had been involved with the ideas and practices of the FGP for a number of years and was committed to the ways that student reflection could build a classroom learning community. She is an outstanding example of a teacher in this context, building relationships with many of the most “at-risk” students in the school. Student self-assessment was a critical aspect of the way these relationships were built. Initial observations and conversations with these children revealed that they were prepared to speak freely about their learning. They emphasised thinking and producing good work. As one girl put it, “I love it when you’re writing and really get into it.” They also saw team work as a great advantage, not only able to help them think and make decisions but also helping them learn to respect every one’s ideas and share responsibility. This was a remarkable achievement. The teacher revealed that earlier in the year she had to continually stop children from vocally and physically abusing each other. Importantly for the project, she had used reflections in the “working with other people” category to address this issue.

Another method used to encourage the children in their thinking about their learning was to issue each child with a notebook. In it they were to write notes about their learning wherever and whenever it occurred. Initially the writing was restricted to school, until the children became proficient in recording and understanding what they needed to do. At the outset students were asked to think about what they knew now and what else they needed to know. Responses generally demonstrated their reflections at unidimensional and multidimensional levels:

I chose this because I enjoyed it and we got to play with a machine and add stuff to it. I learnt how to use a machine. I learnt about the five different things a robot can do ... I learned this by listening to Richard’s instructions and to do things he was talking about. I felt like I was getting smarter just by learning a new thing (Year 5 student from reflective notebook).

As the research proceeded it became apparent that a framework for student self-assessment and reflection would become more powerful if the teacher and children were constantly involved in responding orally and in writing to a series of challenging, interesting and lateral probes. The previously discussed lists of these kinds of probes were then arranged across the framework using a coding process. The nature of this model and the inclusion of the essential elements of reflection, engagement and authentic learning led to it being named the **REAL** Dimensions of Student Self-Assessment (figure 2).
















---

<sup>4</sup> Public housing estates are very poor areas. These are impoverished places for those in society who bear the greatest social, physical and financial difficulties. Invariably there are single-parent families, with increasing numbers of these headed by females.


















Figure 2 - REAL Dimensions of Student Self-Assessment

**Unidimensional – recalling basic feelings, thoughts, actions**

Affective	Cognitive	Operative
<p> What were the fun bits in your learning?</p> <p> What surprised you about your learning?</p> <p> How does working with others make you feel?</p> <p> How do you feel now when it gets tricky?</p> <p> What would make you feel better about today's work?</p>	<p> Write a memo to someone about the most important thing you learned today/yesterday</p> <p> What is your best hard work?</p> <p> What cooperation helped your learning?</p> <p> What was the tricky part?</p> <p> Name two things to make you think harder?</p>	<p> What new thing can you do now?</p> <p> List your strengths</p> <p> Who helped you the most?</p> <p> What is your biggest improvement?</p> <p> What would you change about today's work to help you improve?</p>

**Multidimensional – developing feelings, thought and actions about learning processes**

Affective	Cognitive	Operative
<p> Why were the fun bits fun?</p> <p> Why were you surprised about your learning today?</p> <p> Why does cooperative learning make you feel great?</p> <p> How do you feel when you solved a problem?</p> <p> How could changes to today's work make you feel better?</p>	<p> What strategies did you use to learn something important?</p> <p> How did you know that you had learnt something?</p> <p> What did you learn about working in groups while doing this work?</p> <p> Write two questions you could not answer. Explain</p> <p> Why do you think doing it differently will help with your learning?</p>	<p> What goals did you set for yourself in this activity/task/project? How well did you achieve them?</p> <p> What is the evidence of your achievement about today's learning?</p> <p> What is the most valuable advice you could give to students who are involved in similar projects in the future?</p> <p> How could we change this (lesson/unit/strategy/skill) next time we do this?</p> <p> What would you change if you were to do a similar task to improve your learning?</p>

 Thinking about achievement
















 Looking for evidence

 Working with other people
















 Overcoming barriers

 Reframing the task

**Relational- relating feelings, thought and actions to other areas/processes**

Affective	Cognitive	Operative
<p> How do you feel when you achieve your goals?</p> <p> What other feelings do you have about this work?</p> <p> How can you ensure your group has positive feelings about your work together?</p> <p> What problems do you have to solve about how you feel when it gets tough?</p> <p> How can you feel like this more in your work at school?</p>	<p> Connect this knowledge to something you already know or can do</p> <p> How do these processes/content relate to something else you know?</p> <p> Who do you know who would find this learning (content) or strategy (process) helpful?</p> <p> Find three sources where this new knowledge could be useful.</p> <p> When and where else could you use this information?</p>	<p> Think of a way to use ..... since we practiced it in class</p> <p> Reflect on the strategy we used and why we used it.</p> <p> How could you become more involved in team work next time that would be different than this time??</p> <p> List five places you could use the skills you have learnt during this lesson/unit/task?</p> <p> What would you do differently in your next project given the knowledge you now have?</p>

**Conceptual- translating into concepts feelings, thought and actions about learning processes**

Affective	Cognitive	Operative
<p> Think about the many feelings you have about your work. Use colours and/ or drawing to represent three of these feelings.</p> <p> How can you generate some specific feelings about your work e.g. empathy, curiosity?</p> <p> Survey the members of your group about how they felt during this task and align them with your own feelings.</p> <p> What did you find to be the most difficult part in discussing your feelings about this task? What did you do to overcome this?</p> <p> What other positive feelings would you like to generate in future sessions?</p>	<p> Explain how your thinking was different today from yesterday and from what it could be tomorrow.</p> <p> Why is it important for you to know/understand/be able to do this?</p> <p> Reflect on a conversation you had with someone else that triggered your thinking about.....</p> <p> How could you broaden your thinking through and learn more about what you did today/during a task/lesson/unit?</p> <p> Represent how you think, (drawing, matrix, mind map etc.)</p>	<p> Why is what you have learnt critical for you as a person?</p> <p> List three ways the skills you have learnt can be used elsewhere?</p> <p> How would you help someone else to learn something you discovered today?</p> <p> What did you find out about your problem solving skills and strategies while doing this activity?</p> <p> What advice would you give me before we continue this lesson?</p>

 Thinking about achievement

 Looking for evidence

 Working with other people

 Overcoming barriers

 Reframing task

### The REAL Framework and Student Engagement

It is the contention of this paper that the REAL Framework, in concert with other classroom changes called for within the Fair Go Project, has the potential to be a significant factor in encouraging productive student relationships with school as a place and education as a resource: the kinds of relationships conceptualised as ‘e’ngagement and ‘E’ngagement. The current phase of the FGP is using student interviews and a student engagement questionnaire (Likert scale responses) to measure these increased levels of student engagement.

One of the key issues to emerge from this project is the importance of classroom discourse. At the heart of this discourse is the language of the teacher and the students. The Fair Go Project talks about “teacher inclusive conversations” and “student community of reflection”, a form of classroom discourse that opens up the expectations of the students so that they can openly communicate with others about their thinking, their feelings and their development as learners. The hope is that the REAL framework might be able to provide an important step for teachers in building an engaging “Insider” culture in the classroom learning community. If this happens the view is that there will be very real chances that engaging classroom messages will be realised for the students (table 1).

*Table 1 – Discourses of Power and Engaging Messages for Low SES Students*

knowledge	“We can see the connection and the meaning” – reflectively constructed access to contextualised and powerful knowledge
ability	“I am capable” – feelings of being able to achieve and a spiral of high expectations and aspirations
control	“We do this together” – sharing of classroom time and space: interdependence, mutuality and power with
place	“It’s great to be a kid from” – valued as individual and learner and feelings of belonging and ownership over learning
voice	“We share” – environment of discussion and reflection about learning with students and teachers playing reciprocal meaningful roles

Subsequently there is an authentic hope that they will develop a consciousness that “school is for me”, rather than one of defeat, struggle and giving up.

I chose this work because I am proud of it ... I now know that I can accomplish more things than I thought ... I think I am more confident than I was before ... I can write more than I ever thought ... (Year 6 student from reflective notebook)

### References

- Bernstein, B. (1996) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: theory, research, critique*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Biggs, J. (1995) Assessing for learning: Some dimensions underlying new approaches to educational assessment. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 41(1), p.1-17.
- Black, P & Wiliam, D (1998) Assessment and Classroom Learning. *Assessment in Education* , 5(1), p. 7-71.
- Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B. & Wiliam, D. (2002). *Working inside the black box: Assessment for learning in the classroom*. London: Kings College.
- Bryant, S., & Timmins, A., (2002). *Portfolio assessment: An instructional guide* (2nd Edition). Hong Kong: Department of Curriculum & Instruction, HKIED.

- Butler, R. (2004) *The Development of Self-Evaluation Between Early and Middle Childhood: From Structural Deficits to the Construction of Knowledge, Strategies and Motives in Context*, Paper presented at SELF Research Centre Biannual Conference, Berlin, July.
- Cazden, C. (2001) *Classroom Discourse. The Language of Teaching and Learning*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Connell, R.W., White, V.M., and Johnston, K.M. (1991) *Running Twice As Hard*. Melbourne: Deakin University.
- Cumming, J. & Maxwell, G (1999). Contextualising Authentic Assessment. *Assessment in Education* 6 (2), p. 177-196.
- Durrant, C. & Green, B. (2000) Literacy and the new technologies in school education: Meeting the l(IT)eracy challenge? *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 23, 2, p. 88-109.
- Dweck, C.S. (1999) *Self-Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development*. Philadelphia: Taylor & Francis.
- Fair Go Team (2005, in press) *School Is For Me: Pathways to Student Engagement*. Sydney: Priority Schools Funding Program, NSW Department of Education and Training.
- Fredricks, J.A., Blumenfield, P.C. & Paris, A.H. (2004) School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence, *Review of Educational Research*, 76, 1, pp. 59-109.
- Gee, J. (1990) *Sociolinguistics and Literacies: Ideologies in Discourse*. London: Falmer Press.
- Haberman, M. (1991) The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan* 73 (4), p. 290-294.
- Hart, D. (1999). Opening assessment to our students. *Social Education*, 63(6), p. 343-345.
- Hattie, J. (2002) *Why is it so difficult to enhance self-concept in the classroom: The power of feedback in the self-concept-achievement relationship*, paper presented at International SELF-Conference, Sydney, August.
- Hayes, D., Lingard, B. & Mills, M. (2000) Productive Pedagogies. *Education Links*, 60, p.10-13.
- Jones, A. (1989) The Cultural Production of Classroom Practice. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 10, p. 19-31.
- McFadden, M. & Munns, G. (2002) Student Engagement and the Social Relations of Pedagogy, in *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23, 3, p.357-366.
- Mercer, N. (2000) *Words and minds: how we use language to think together*. London: Routledge.
- Mercer, N., Dawes, L., Wegerif, R. & Sams, C. (2004) Reasoning as a scientist: ways of helping children to use language to learn science. *British Educational Research Journal*, 30, 3, p. 359-377.
- Munns, G. (1996) *Teaching Resistant Koori Students: Towards Non-Reproductive Education*, unpublished PhD Thesis, Armidale: University of New England.
- Munns, G. (2004). *A sense of wonder: Student engagement in low SES school communities*. Paper presented at Australian Association for Research in Education. Melbourne Dec 2004.

- Munns, G. (2005) School as a Cubbyhouse: Tensions Between Intent and Practice in Classroom Curriculum, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 25, 1, p. 1-12.
- Munns, G., Woodward, H. & Koletti, J. (2005) Engagement and student self-assessment, in: Fair Go Team, *School Is For Me Pathways to Student Engagement*. Sydney: NSW Department of Education and Training.
- Newmann, F. & Associates (1996) *Authentic Achievement: Restructuring Schools for Intellectual Quality*. San Francisco: Josey Bass.
- Woodward, H. & Munns, G. (2003) *Insiders' Voices: Self-assessment and Student Engagement*, paper presented at New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE) and Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Joint Conference (Auckland, 2003) and European Research Association (Bergin, 2004).