Element 14

Learning Outputs
& 360° Assessments

360° Assessments refer to a process that enables a learner to both reflect on their growth as a learner, as well as receive feedback to help provide direction for any subsequent phase of learning.

360 Assessments

The most effective learning occurs when it is actively carried out by the student. This is no different to active reflection in learning. Too often in traditional learning models, educators and parents discuss the progress of a student with the student having no input into what is being said. In this context, accountability is removed from the learner. Learning is only truly authentic when it can be communicated by the learner.

Although it is critical to gain feedback, it is equally important to develop the skills to self-reflect and actively communicate learning. Increasing self-awareness challenges students to develop the key language and behaviours to self-reflect. Self-reflection increases autonomy, self-efficacy and empowers learners to take accountability. These are vital skills students need when they leave the refuge of formal education to navigate their own lives.

A 360° assessment is a process which enables students to communicate their learning through self-reflection. They can present their learning in whatever form they wish. This could be a research piece, a prototyped model, a performance; anything that makes learning visible. It is an opportunity for students to communicate any essential competencies and skills they have gained during a learning cycle. A cycle usually lasts around 12 weeks.

Over the course of a learning cycle, students continue to gain knowledge, apply it, get feedback and then reflect on what has been learnt. A 360 assessment culminates in the student discussing the progress they have gained in their presentation at the end of the learning cycle. The cycle provides the continued preparation and a learning community should be sufficiently set up to provide learning support throughout it.

360° assessments enable feedback from multiple persons including the student, their teacher, parents and the wider community. This type of feedback can have the greatest impact on learning because it is learner-led and occurs in real-time. Facilitating collaboration with key actors in this way strengthens the overall learning culture in the community.

Learning is a very personal thing and a learning community should empower all its students with the opportunity to develop self-awareness on their unique learning journey. A 360 assessment equips every student with the skills to continue on that personal journey long after formal education is complete, by simulating the realistic scenarios that they will encounter in the real world.

Then	Now
• Assessment was often limited to measuring content and suited to a factory model society.	• Skills such as communication and collaboration are crucial for individuals to succeed.
• Feedback on students was delivered by the teacher usually to the parent.	• Students assume responsibility for their own learning and communicate it through on-going self-reflection.
• Teachers and parents removed accountability from the student by removing students from the feedback process.	• Students assume accountability for their learning through self-awareness and self-reflection.

Starting Questions

1. Does your learning community facilitate opportunities for your students to communicate their own learning?
2. How much freedom and responsibility should students be given to navigate their own learning?
3. How much freedom and responsibility should a learning community place on its students being able to effectively communicate their own learning?
4. Does the learning community use a variety of feedback methods to support student learning? What types of feedback?
5. Is accountability for learning placed into the hands of the learner in the learning community? How?

Key Initial Actions

1. Use 360 Assessments to initiate and drive all learning. When a student knows they will present their learning, it makes learning more authentic and experiential because it has a purpose.
2. Expose learners to the key language and processes of learning. Awareness of language and processes such as cognition, meta-cognition, self-regulation, learning about learning, growth mindsets and neuroplasticity,enhances learning and empowers students to set their own course for success.
3. Feedback during 360 assessments must be an open invitation for all key actors in the learning community. This must include parents, non-teaching staff, learners and educators.

On-going Actions

1. Ensure varied self-reflection exists during a learning cycle to provide opportunities to enhance all learning experiences through continued self-evaluation.
2. Promote a culture of varied feedback to provide learners with the opportunity to gain vital insights and ensure quality preparation.
3. The 360 assessment should allude to individual purpose. When students are empowered with the opportunity to explore their 'why' or purpose through their learning, they are much better equipped in being able to self-reflect and communicate it to an audience.
4. Use 360 Assessments to help build a strong learning culture. This can be done by involving the whole learning community and using it as an opportunity to empower students to actively participate in and assume responsibility for their own learning.

Further Reading

Why You Should Make Time for Self-Reflection (Even If You Hate Doing It)

Teaching self-reflection: A necessary part of the learning process

Student Reflection: A Tool for Growth and Development

What is Peer Learning and Why is it Important?

How to Help Your Employees Learn from Each Other

What Self-Awareness Really Is (and How to Cultivate It)

The Impact of the Self-Awareness Process on Learning and Leading

Having Students Lead Parent Conferences

Watch

How to: Student-led conferences

Find out More

> *'We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.'*
>
> *John Dewey*

As an educator working in the primary sector, I vividly recall the annual learning reflection process. We held 15 minute parent-teacher meetings once per year where the student was not present, and disseminated an end of year report on an A4 page - supposedly a true reflection of each learner. While it is good to gain feedback from an educator, one of the fundamental flaws of this reflection process was that the learner had no control over what was being said about them and the report card became an oracle for the parent who would use teacher reflections to encourage and steer their child, even if it was inaccurate. A common affirmation from these reflections was parents and educators coming to a common understanding and agreement on the reflection, which was often enough to validate the feedback process. Worst of all, the learner was labelled by the meeting and report card system, and at an impressionable age made to believe that what was said about them was absolute truth.

Fostering learner growth under this type of system limits student capacity because it removes accountability from the student. For learning to truly reflect the growth of every individual, reflection must come from the individuals themselves

Key Ideas

1. 360 Assessments - a description.

2. 360 assessments develop key language and behaviours for effective learning.

3. 360 assessments promote learner accountability.

4. 360 assessments create unique opportunities for communication, collaboration and strengthen a learning culture.

5. Learning guides play a critical role in preparing learners for 360 assessments.

6. Continued learning and reflection occurs throughout a learning cycle to support the 360 assessments at the end of the cycle.

7. The Learnlife elements are represented through the 360 assessment process.

Questions

- Do students share accountability for their learning with the wider community?

- Does the learning community develop capacity for student self-reflection as a method to enhancing learning experiences and outputs?

- Does the learning community create a culture that promotes collaboration to support all learning?

- Is the assessment of learning in the community an ongoing process, or does it only exist for standardised assessment measures?

- Does the language of learning in the community promote continued personal growth and development?

1. 360 Assessments - a description.

A 360 assessment is a process where a student summarises and presents gains in their learning over a learning cycle, typically three months. It is normally attended by parents and guardians, a learning peer or two and a learning guide or two. The 360 assessment follows a set pattern where the learner methodically talks about their major developments and learning. What is discussed is decided by the learner, yet it often covers transdisciplinary topics, projects, literacy, numeracy and anything else relevant. The learner selects and creates the format for themselves and presents it in their own unique, individual way. A 360 assessment is a powerful tool on the pathway to self-determined learning.

It is best to understand the 360 assessment process as a culmination of a learning cycle - everything that happens during the cycle period is critical preparation in the lead up to the final presentation. The 360 assessment is experiential and learners are encouraged to think ahead as they prepare for their imminent presentation - all learning should be of a consistent high quality with growth opportunities. Learners have the opportunity to attach their own passion and purpose to their 360 assessment, which creates a very enriching and authentic experience for all involved.

2. 360 assessments develop key language and behaviours for effective learning.

As a student moves through their learning cycle, the language of learning is discussed and learners are given opportunities to develop key language skills to communicate learning with peers, learning guides and other key actors. They become aware of key phrases such as; collaboration, socio-emotional intelligence, growth

mindset, learning about learning, transdisciplinary approaches, empathy, discussing their 'why' or ikigai, skills and competencies, motivation, peer learning and support, feedback and reflection, experiential learning and positive relationships, to name some. One of the most rewarding aspects of the 360 assessment is listening to learners use this language to communicate what they have learnt and also crucially, how they have learnt during a learning cycle.

3. 360 assessments promote learner accountability.

When a learner is given the opportunity to attach their own passion and purpose to their learning, it immediately increases motivation and offers learners the chance to express their 'why'. This increases accountability and encourages deep reflection.

During a learning cycle, learners who demonstrate accountability will reflect continuously, bringing further meaning to their learning. This is quite challenging, because it requires a deep understanding of what self-reflection actually is, and the ability to identify key areas for development that can be tough to tackle because it can require behavioural adjustment.

One of the most challenging aspects of accountability is admitting failure, identifying needs or having the courage to begin again if necessary. A 360 assessment encourages high accountability because learners become aware of having to validate their learning, and might go that extra mile to improve and affirm their learning when they know they will be presenting their unique passion and purpose to an audience.

Some key behaviours emerging from learners in their preparation for 360 assessments include self-reflection and self-awareness. Self-reflection, as John Dewey aptly pointed out, is *'the only type of thinking that leads to learning'*. During a learning cycle, if learners develop the skills to reflect on their process, they can greatly improve their outcomes. Self-reflection validates and increases reasons for doing and promotes improvement. It also increases autonomy, self-efficacy and empowers learners to take ownership over their own process.

> *'Follow effective action with quiet reflection. From the quiet reflection will come even more effective action.'*
>
> *Peter Drucker*

Self-awareness can greatly improve performance and support the communication of learning during 360 assessments. If a learner is self-aware and has the capacity to question their learning behaviours and amend where required, they are on the right pathway to becoming self-determined, lifelong learners. Self-awareness is generally seen as one's ability to monitor their inner world and consider how their behaviour positively or negatively impacts them. In a learning context, having this skill essentially demonstrates metacognitive and self-regulatory capabilities and the ability to improve habits of mind. A learner who is self-aware is constantly questioning, reflecting and evaluating their thinking and synthesizing information to improve their learning.

> *'The unexamined life is not worth living.'*
> *Socrates*

4. 360 assessments create unique opportunities for communication, collaboration and strengthen a learning culture.

Students learn to reflect and present their learning in profound ways during a 360 assessment. The process of having to talk about their journey provides a unique opportunity to verbalise learning in very positive ways and use key learning terminology to communicate. It is often a demonstration of self-awareness and inner-character. The carefully sculpted manner of delivery enables learners to recognise their own growth and articulate that to a very appreciative audience. Furthermore, the assessment format offers unique creativity, enabling learners to decide on how they wish to present their experiences. This bespoke process reflects individual capacity and enables the audience to deliver authentic, useful feedback for future growth.

The 360 assessment promotes high-collaboration and demonstrates that being part of a community is conducive to better learning because it enables peers to support individual growth. Peer support and learning is so effective in preparation for 360 assessments because learners share similar experiences and can develop empathy as they begin to appreciate the struggles of others on a deeper level. This type of learning community inspires connections, diversity, cultivates positive relationships, strengthens overall culture and increases the health and wellbeing of individuals and the community.

In a world of multiple languages, it is important to allow learners to use their home language or emotional language to express themselves when presenting their 360 assessments. This promotes a safe environment for individuals and encourages a cultural connection and sense of place.

5. Learning guides play a critical role in preparing learners for 360 assessments.

Learning guides nurture reflective mindsets and encourage students to explore creative ways to demonstrate learning. The design and delivery of learning during a three month cycle is critical preparation, and learning guides commit themselves to engaging and validating the reasons for learning. The successful preparation and execution of a 360 assessment is testimony to strong relationships cultivated between learning guides and learners.

Learning guides assume responsibility for influencing the key language and behaviours of learners. They encourage learners to cultivate self-reflection and self-awareness strategies that can enhance performance. Essentially the learning guides teach learners to teach themselves, which requires careful thought, preparation and deep knowledge of each individual in the learning community. Individual empowerment is a crucial aspect of the mission of the learning guides, and they work diligently to motivate learners to remain engaged, reminding them of the reasons for doing so. By assuming the position of facilitator, learning guides offer learners control over what they are learning and how they decide to learn it, which is a pathway to self-determination and delivered through encouraging and fostering unique passion and purpose.

6. Continued learning and reflection occurs throughout a learning cycle to support the 360 assessments at the end of the cycle.

It is important to recognise that learning is not a single practice, but an ongoing journey lasting in continued cycles throughout one's life. The 360 assessment should not be understood to be a one-off presentation or performance as such to

entertain, but an authentic process that demonstrates one's development. Over several learning cycles, as learner capacity increases and 360 assessment presentation skills continue to improve, they may continually nurture their own pathway to becoming self-determined, lifelong learners.

> *'Learning without reflection is a waste. Reflection without learning is dangerous.'*
> *Peter Drucker*

Over the course of a learning cycle, learners continue to gain knowledge, apply that knowledge, get feedback and then reflect on what has been learned. The learning community is sufficiently set up to provide learning support in various ways, with peer to peer learning encouraged throughout. Peer to peer learning is great support for the 360 assessment because all learners are empathetic to each other's presentation coming at the end of the cycle. It creates a space where the learner can feel safe and take risks without a sense that their teacher is evaluating their performance while they are learning. Learners are also more likely to have candid conversations about areas they need to develop with a peer rather than with someone who has perceived power over the direction of the learning. In peer to peer learning, the dynamics of hierarchy disappear.

7. The Learnlife elements are represented through the 360 assessment process.

Essentially the 360 assessment is a culmination of the Learnlife elements that can help shape and deliver effective and exceptional learning experiences. These elements include; purpose-inspired learning, establishing personal values and vision, growing positive relationships, choosing a growth mindset, growing a positive organisational culture and vision, shaping a strong learning culture, personal learning and adaptive groupings, diversifying methodologies, concepts, skills & competencies, learning experiences: design and delivery, learning experiences: blended and online learning, creative learning environments, and technology and digital platforms.

One of the overarching aims at Learnlife is for a paradigm to emerge that promotes the cultivation of individual self-determined, lifelong learning. The 360 assessment encourages individuals to take accountability for their learning while being supported and steered in a direction that fosters continued personal development.

The real measure of success in learning growth at Learnlife is that academically resist-ant and hesitant learners take the 360 assessment as seriously as the hyper-engaged learners. It is a very sophisticated process that cannot be faked. It is the consistency of learning growth evident across all students that demonstrates the power of an emerging new paradigm - and the ability of a team to contribute to the embedding of a strong learning culture in a vibrant, inclusive learning ecosystem. A 360 assess-ment is the learner's opportunity to take charge over their learning and deliver their own parent's meeting and report cards all at once.

Act Now

A 360 assessment is essentially the glue that fastens all the exceptional compo-nents of learning practices together. These components include the elements of change mentioned in the previous section; purpose-inspired learning, establish-ing personal values and vision, growing positive relationships, choosing a growth mindset, growing a positive organisational culture and vision, shaping a strong learning culture, personal learning and adaptive groupings, diversifying methodol-ogies, concepts, skills & competencies, learning experiences: design and delivery, learning experiences: blended and online learning, creative learning environments, and technology and digital platforms.

The following points are critical to ensuring a learning community is adequately poised to produce optimum learning outcomes that are reflected in 360 assessments:

1. Use 360 Assessments to initiate and drive all learning

Any learning cycle should culminate with an endpoint - at Learnlife, the 360 assess-ment is that endpoint. It immediately makes learning more authentic and experien-tial, because there is a purpose and reason for individuals to strive during a learning cycle. When learners and learning guides are aware of the anticipated 360 assess-ment, it can catalyse proactive behaviour in preparation. The success of a 360 assess-ment is realised and reached through shared accountability - accountability for the facilitation of learning from learning guides, and accountability for demonstrating the learning and personal growth that has taken place from the student.

2. Ensure continued and varied self-reflection exists during a learning cycle

The success of 360 assessments cannot be measured solely in quantitative terms - validation is reliant on qualitative measurements brought about by relational in-teractions. Ongoing self-reflection must reflect daily learning experiences from the perspective of the learner and learning guide. Learners should be consistently eval-

uating the quality of their learning to increase self-awareness, while learning guides should consistently evaluate the quality and delivery of learning experiences.

Varied feedback is an essential tool for driving learning. It offers individuals opportunities to gain vital information from various sources to best suit learning needs. The types of feedback ought to include peer-to-peer, self-reflection, verbal and non-verbal, informal and formal, digital feedback or coaching and mentorship, all with the goal to empower individuals towards self-improvement. The aggregation of feedback should ensure an individual is suitably poised and prepared for their 360 assessment. Also, the use of personal, self-reflection should be consistently encouraged to grow individual capacity towards self-determined, lifelong learning.

3. Feedback during 360 assessments must come from various sources

The audience at a 360 assessment should be varied and include learning guides, parents or guardians, other learners and anyone else who wishes to attend. Feedback from various sources means that authenticating and validating learning does not rest solely on one person - traditionally the duties of a teacher.

4. Expose learners to the key language of learning

When learners are exposed to and understand key learning concepts such as cognition, meta-cognition, self-regulation, learning about learning, growth mindsets, neuroplasticity and other key features that enhance learning, they are empowered to set their own course for success. Also, when a learner is aware of presenting to an audience, the responsibility created by accountability can increase the thoroughness of their work and encourage them to communicate using the language of learning used during a learning cycle.

5. The 360 assessment should allude to individual purpose

If individuals are fully immersed in their own unique learning, they are more likely to confidently explain their 'why' or reason for doing. Offering individuals the chance to explore their 'why' or reason for doing should be one of education's overarching missions. Learners must be given the unique opportunity to explore their own purpose during a learning cycle and furthermore given the responsibility to communicate this to an audience during their 360 assessment. The outcome, if correctly guided and facilitated, will encompass individual learning passion. In this learning scenario, content comes from the only place worthwhile and authentic - the individual.

6. Use 360 assessments to help build a strong learning culture

A 360 assessment is an essential factor that can support the growth of a strong learning culture. A learning community must actively piece effective educational

processes together to ensure exceptional learning is taking place at all times. It is a crucial bridge between the learner and learning guide, with both these stakeholders playing a critical role in the overall success of any learning ecosystem.

Examples in Action

The concept of self-reflection and self-assessment is very broad by definition, with various methods and practices available. In a new learning paradigm, the need for increased self-assessment methods that mirror that of the real-world and world of employment can best prepare young people for the world that they will enter into after formal education. This section, for that reason, includes examples from the business world as well as schools who have incorporated authentic self-reflection and assessment into their daily practices to support authentic, real life practices.

The Reflection Process

[Gibbs' reflective cycle](#)
Gibbs' reflective cycle is arguably one of the most famous models of reflection leading you through different stages to make sense of an experience. It offers a framework for examining experiences, and given its cyclic nature lends itself particularly well to repeated experiences, allowing you to learn and plan from things that either went well or didn't go well.

[4 Models of reflection – core concepts for reflective thinking](#)
The theories behind reflective thinking and reflective practice are complex. This link provides 4 well known processes that are used in educational settings including supporting language and questioning that can be used to encourage deep self-evaluation for learning.

[Getting started with Reflective Practice](#)
Cambridge International Education Teaching and Learning Team document that encompasses various processes in reflective practice from the point of view of both the teacher and student.

[Wildwood School](#)
At the elementary level, students have opportunities throughout the year to present and celebrate their work with family and friends at exhibitions and student-led conferences. For middle and upper school students, portfolios contain samples from each subject area, illustrating growth and mastery through a series of progressively challenging assignments.

[The Howard School](#)
One of the hallmarks of The Howard School is the student-led conference designed to share student progress. Held three times per year for Lower School and twice per year for Middle School / Transition and High School, each conference lasts one hour or more. The conferences are student-led and reflect the belief that understanding one's process of learning is as important as the knowledge itself.

[Discovery College Year 7 Festival of Learning: Student Led Conferences](#)
The student-led conference format provides the opportunity for students with their form tutor and teachers to reflect on their learning. Students then prepare a presentation of their learning, which their parents/guardians are invited into school to see. This is the student's moment to share his or her reflections on achievements and challenges.

Further reading

[OECD: The Nature of Learning](#)

[Why You Should Make Time for Self-Reflection (Even If You Hate Doing It)](#)

[Teaching self-reflection: A necessary part of the learning process](#)

[Student Reflection: A Tool for Growth and Development](#)

[What is peer to peer learning?](#)

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[Having Students Lead Parent Conferences](#)

Watch

[How to: Student-led conferences](#)

[Student-Led Conferences: Empowerment and Ownership](#)