

# SELF ASSESSMENT FOR SOCIALIZING

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## **ABSTRACT**

Socializing is an integral part of human relations and auger well for the human development. Defined as ‘the involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work and making judgments about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards’, self assessment by its nature teaches students how to socialize in appropriate ways within and without the classroom. High school teachers and students became partners in the process of assessment and self directed learning. The questions that teachers asked a class served as models for questions that learners asked themselves in self assessment. The implications for healthy social interactions are far reaching especially when there is so much turmoil in today’s family. As family members try to reach consensus they are better able to understand each other and appreciate and celebrate diversity and individual differences that redound to less internal stress and promote harmony.

**Key words:** self assessment; socializing; everyday living; standards; criteria.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Developing and using new curricula is our mandate if we are to respond to the immediate needs of a ‘highly technological, fast-changing global economy’ where students are themselves undergoing revolutionary changes. Changing the mindsets of students, teachers, and administrators is an integral part of the process. Additionally, the kinds of teaching and learning formats necessary for the new century require students to operate in a relaxed environment where proper socialization is encouraged and nurtured. Some pertinent questions that come to mind include: Do you enjoy your classes when your students refuse to socialise with each other? Do you enjoy your classes when your students socialise too little or too much in your class? How would you like to have your students socialise in appropriate ways in your class? I am sure you would agree with me that too little, too much, or inappropriate ways of socializing in class are not conducive to

progress. May I introduce to you self assessment as a viable option in teaching your students to socialise. ‘How does self assessment help a student to socialise appropriately?’

Let's clarify exactly what we mean by self assessment. Is it a matter of the student providing his/her own assessment independent of his/her teacher? ‘Is it about spending time thinking about one’s assessment’? We shall define self assessment as ‘*the involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work and making judgments about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards*’ (Boud, 1986: 5).

With students seated in a circular manner on the periphery of the room where they are facing each other for maximum interaction a conversation for constructing criteria for assessment may proceed as follows:

Below are two sentences A and B.

Read each sentence very carefully then answer questions 1 and 2.

A. **The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.**

B. **Over the lazy dog the quick brown fox jumped.**

1. Which sentence do you like **BETTER**? -----

Which **ONE** feature of the sentence makes you like it **BETTER**?-----

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Find out what your neighbour did then answer **Questions 3 and 4.**

2. Which sentence does your neighbour like **BETTER**?-----

Which **ONE** feature of the sentence makes your neighbour like it **BETTER**?-----

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You and your neighbour discuss your answers to questions 2 and 4,

then answer questions 5 and 6.

3. What **SINGLE** feature did you and your neighbour like **BETTER**?-----

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4. Give **ONE** reason why you and your neighbour like that single feature **BETTER**-

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The above process forces each student to interact with the person next to him, with the teacher and with the entire group in that order. Students had to face each other, look each other in the eye and engage fully the attention of each other in active listening and interacting. Having started with the person next door the student builds confidence to interact with the entire group. The socializing process is progressively incremental and builds the self-esteem of the student. As seating was rearranged (and this continued throughout the entire exercise) each student was forced to interact with as many students in the class as time would permit.

Having established criteria for assessment the next stage is validation of those established criteria for assessment. The conversation may proceed as follows:

Here are two sentences A and B.

Read each sentence very carefully then **answer questions 1 and 2.**

C. **The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.**

D. **Over the lazy dog the quick brown fox jumped.**

1. Which sentence do you like **BETTER**? -----

2. Name **ONE reason** for your choice-----

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Find out what your neighbour did, then **answer Questions 3 and 4.**

3. Which sentence does your neighbour like **BETTER**?-----

4. Name **ONE** reason why your neighbour chose that sentence-----

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 You and your neighbour discuss your answers to questions 2 and 4,

**then answer questions 5 and 6.**

5. What **SINGLE** sentence do you and your neighbour agree to chose?-----

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 Name **ONE** reason why you and your neighbour agreed to choose that sentence.-----

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 The process of validating established assessment criteria is now completed and students are becoming more comfortable in socialising with each other in appropriate ways (not too much or too little), under the watchful attention of the teacher. The next stage in the self assessment training is applying the criteria for assessment to make judgment. An appropriate conversation may proceed as follows:

Here are two sentences A and B with 3 criteria.

Read each sentence very carefully then **answer question 1.**

A. **The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.**

B. **Over the lazy dog the quick brown fox jumped.**

**Here are the three criteria:**

- (i) The sentence begins with a preposition
- (ii) The subject of the sentence lies towards the end of the sentence
- (iii) The sentence creates suspense for the reader.

1. **Match the given criteria to sentences A and B.**

Criterion 1 matches Sentence -----

Criterion 2 matches Sentence -----

Criterion 3 matches Sentence -----

Find out what your neighbour did then **answer Question 2.**

2. What match did your neighbour have?

Criterion 1 matches to Sentence -----

Criterion 2 matches to Sentence -----

Criterion 3 matches to Sentence -----

You and your neighbour discuss your answers to questions 1 and 2, then answer question 3.

3. What **single** match did you and your neighbour decide on?

Criterion 1 matches to Sentence -----

Criterion 2 matches to Sentence -----

Criterion 3 matches to Sentence -----

Step by step, students socialised with each other as they established criteria, validated them and used the validated criteria to formulate judgment. Engagement of the kind described earlier encourages students to socialise appropriately as they unambiguously articulate mutually agreed criteria. The process is repeated as many times as the teacher deems necessary to draw out the introverts and allow the extroverts to be mindful of their role in the discussions. The teacher may use any suitable material to reinforce any concepts she feels useful. Topics could be of social, spiritual, intellectual significance and sufficient interest to the students. Students begin to understand that not all 'talking in class' is considered unacceptable. They learn that there is a time and place for every activity. They begin to enjoy each other's company in a productive manner. They understand the power of appropriate, timely discourse. They begin to value discussions and learn that in real life situations rarely are decisions taken unilaterally discussions occur with subordinates, superiors, colleagues, etc. Consensus is arrived at following clearly defined regulations or logical procedures. My students have made comments like, '*It does not pay to have enemies in class if self assessment is to be done properly*' (Cindy)...'*I love discussing with others and making friends in class*' (David)...'*Had I not been participating in these self assessment discussions I would not have even spoken to*

*Jim' (Jen)...'Self assessment gave me a new appreciation for my colleagues' (Dennis)...*

Despite appearing to be an individual activity, self assessment leads to interaction, such as discussing assessment criteria or when the learner is required to justify his or her self assessment. Such discussions would lead to reconstructing new schemata, moderation, norm-referencing, negotiation and other social and cognitive demands related to the mindful reception and assimilation of feedback (Topping, 2002). Self assessment by its very nature is also a social activity occurring in situations that are social and collaborative and frequently with others who are more expert than the self assessor. Van Krayenoord and Paris (1997) noted that self assessment does not occur in isolation because the self has very little meaning unless it relates to others. This inevitably means that there must be relationship with peers and teachers. The reliability and validity of scores derived from self assessment is formulated not only in relation to standards and/or criteria but also in relation to social interactions with assessments of peers and teachers. Before students can decide on acceptable standards and/or criteria for their work they must use some reliable and valid forms of reference by which they could be confident that the standards and/or criteria they intend to use to make judgements about their work are 'universally' acceptable as far as they exist within their locus of control. Self assessment may be the key to producing a common currency for evaluating an individual's productivity.

It is precisely for this reason that, self assessment is an interactive, collaborative process involving the self and others in relation to standards and/or criteria. It is no small wonder that in the comprehensive study, high school students who received formal training in self assessment skills were encouraged to discuss with their neighbours and

arrive at mutually agreed solutions to problems. That process then extended beyond that neighbour to others in the classroom and also to the group as a whole, with input from the teacher serving as facilitator. Collaboration is the key to its success. This too explains why this researcher conducted group sessions throughout the three terms of the entire academic year of self assessment training. High school teachers and students became partners in the process of assessment and self directed learning. The questions that teachers asked a class served as models for questions that learners asked themselves in self assessment. Educational goals underpin the questions and students were led, at different levels, to a realisation of these goals. Needless to say the implications for healthy social interactions are far reaching especially when there is so much turmoil in today's family. As family members try to reach consensus they are better able to understand each other and appreciate and celebrate diversity and individual differences that redound to less internal stress and promote harmony. This researcher trusts that the views shared would allow teachers to assist their students to socialise appropriately. Certainly, changes may be made to suit age cohort and other anticipated variables peculiar to the group.

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