

USING TOC TEACHING METHODS TO ANALYZE THE PROBLEM OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS

I teach several courses at a Teacher's College dealing with solutions for improving teaching, learning and assessment process. All of my courses are based on the 3 change questions according to the TOC process:

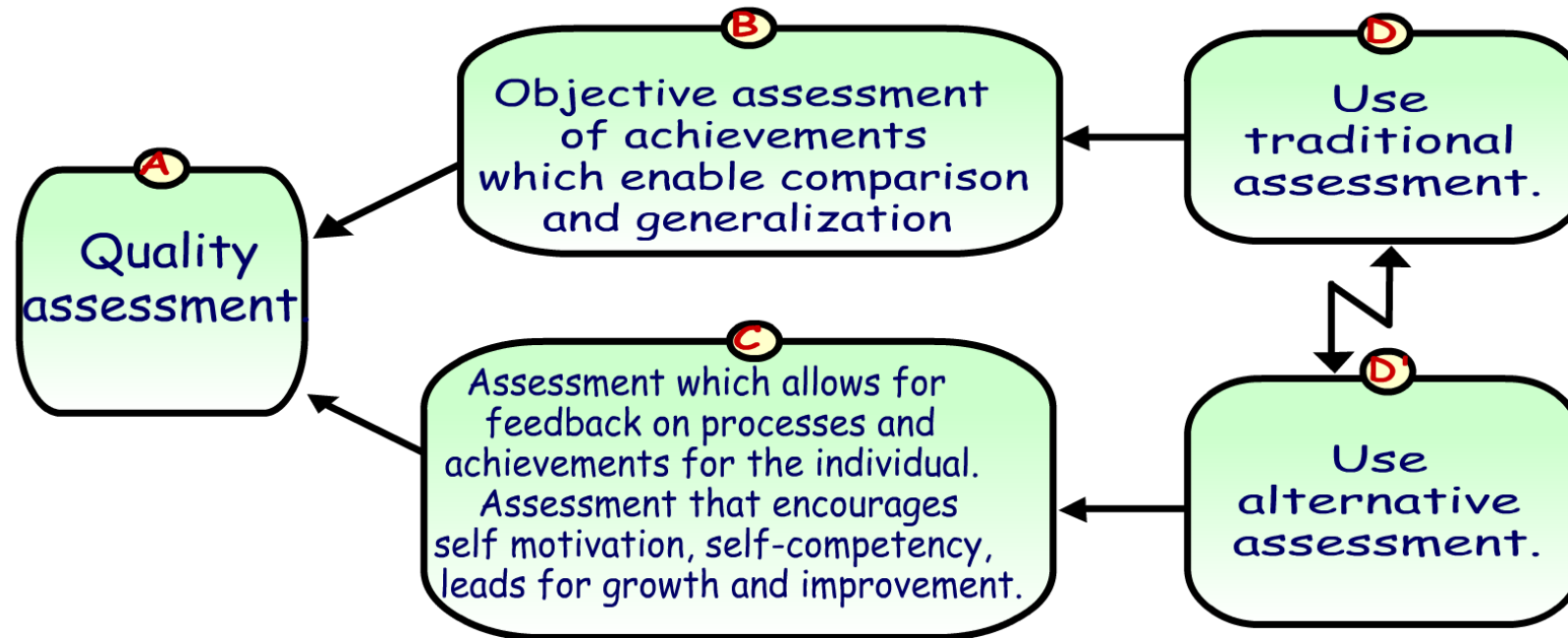
1. *What to change*
2. *To what to change*
3. *How to cause the change*

The first part of our learning process is geared to identifying the problem that the course deals with and giving a solution. The course uses 3 and more clouds to identify the core problem, the way the solution should take, and to enable the learners to examine the quality of the solutions. We then consider the solutions presented by various researchers, in regard to the improvement of the teaching, learning and assessment process as found in recent articles.

I would like to share one example of a course process on the subject of Alternative Assessment. The dilemmas presented were:

1. *Multiple choice questions, or, open ended questions.*
2. *Grading, or, verbal assessment.*
3. *Giving a class exam, or, giving a take home exam.*
4. *Presenting the assessment criteria to the students, or, not presenting the assessment criteria to the students.*
5. *Giving a test based on a small number of questions, or, giving the test based on numerous questions.*
6. *Making up the same test for all, or, catering to the needs of the students according to their styles and abilities.*
7. *Limiting the time of the exam, or, not limiting the time of the exam.*
8. *Assigning a group task and giving an individual grades according to the product, or, not to give individual grade.*
9. *Assess the product, or, assess the process.*

After presenting the various dilemmas, the teachers were asked to work in small groups. They were asked to try to identify the reasons/needs for each one of the wants in the conflict. They were also asked to formulate a common objective for B and C. As a result, we received several specific "clouds". We presented 5 specific clouds and through a short process found the general cloud which reflects the specific private clouds:



After identifying the 2 needs (B & C), it was easy to "invent" the Alternative Assessment which emphasized the evaluation key. For example:

A Research Project with the grading key (rubic), created with the help of the students themselves, and reflects all the components and skills which have to be integrated and used while doing the research.

Or another alternative: Performing a clearly formulated of "Authentic Task", which enable students to plan, to think and make responsible decisions for performing the task.

The teachers showed great enthusiasm and involvement because, every one understands clearly what two needs the task must fulfill. The teachers formulated authentic and clear tasks--tasks that arouse interest and curiosity, and require taking responsibility. Both for the learning process itself and the framework. (Like teamwork and keeping to schedule).

The reflections of the students at the end of each stage of learning, clearly showed the need for answering both needs in quality assessment; graded objective assessment, and assessment that allows for individual student arouses motivation and growth. I'm very proud leading thinking process knowledge to teachers, with my "silver bullet" method.