

CRADLE suggests...

Developing evaluative judgement



WHAT IS EVALUATIVE JUDGEMENT?

A key goal of higher education is to prepare graduates who are capable of effective practice. This requires individuals to recognise quality in their own work. This is why evaluative judgement, “the capability to make decisions about the quality of work of self and others” (1, p. 471), is so important. Such judgement can be refined over time and with practice, as students necessarily draw on disciplinary understandings of quality.

THE RESEARCH

The CRADLE team explored how to foster the development of evaluative judgement in university courses and published an open access paper (1), convened an international symposium, and produced a book, *Developing Evaluative Judgement in Higher Education* (2).



Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning

CRADLE suggests is a series of briefings from the [Centre for Research and Assessment in Digital Learning \(CRADLE\)](#), which translates our own research into practice-based possibilities.

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' EVALUATIVE JUDGEMENT

Educators can design and facilitate targeted activities that help students develop their evaluative judgement as part of normal learning tasks:

Identify specific areas that require evaluative judgement development

Evaluative judgement must be developed in context and with respect to particular domains of knowledge. Within each, educators can identify key areas for focus, along with what constitutes quality in them.

Help students learn to discern quality

Quality is often difficult to express. Despite this, tacit notions of quality can be made more explicit through engaging students with standards and criteria; for example, by using exemplars, discussions, and co-creating rubrics with them. This is best developed across the span of a course.

Foster students' judgement processes

Students need opportunities to practice making evaluative judgements about the quality of their own work and that of others. In the same way that teachers engage in moderation activities, students need multiple opportunities to calibrate their judgements. This can occur through formative self- and peer-assessment activities, with staff feedback on the quality of students' judgements.

Recognise and manage biases

When students practice making judgements, they need to be assisted in identifying the inevitable biases they bring to bear on them, so

they can learn to spot situations in which their judgement is likely to be distorted, e.g. when they judge on the basis of effort expended rather than outcome.

Encourage students to explain their evaluative judgements

Without being able to identify and articulate the qualities of good work, students are unlikely to be able to produce it for themselves. Articulation of underlying reasoning processes helps to demonstrate that judgements are made for the right reasons. One way to implement this is through structured group activities where students analyse examples in relation to criteria/rubrics.

Provide opportunities to take action on evaluative judgements

It is not enough to know about quality and to judge quality. Students must demonstrate it in their own work. This requires opportunities to iteratively produce work, make evaluative judgements, and act on feedback information. This might take the form of nested task designs, where students are given the opportunity to improve in the following task. This could be extended across a program of study by asking students to reflect on previous work and feedback as they prepare for assessments in later years.

CRADLE TEAM MEMBERS

Prof. David Boud, Dr Joanna Tai, A/Prof. Rola Ajjawi, A/Prof. Margaret Bearman, A/Prof. Phillip Dawson and Dr Ernesto Panadero.

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FIND MORE

- Tai, J., Ajjawi, R., Boud, D., Dawson, P., & Panadero, E. (2018). [Developing evaluative judgement: enabling students to make decisions about the quality of work](#). *Higher Education*, 76(3), 467–481.
- Boud, D., Ajjawi, R., Dawson, P., & Tai, J. (ed.) (2018). [Developing evaluative judgement in higher education](#). London: Routledge.

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