

4.2 Developing Assessment in the Classroom

To support development of assessment in the classroom, teachers need to build their own skills and knowledge so that it becomes an integral part of classroom practice. In Appendix A5 of this guide you will find a training activity, 'Taking stock of formative assessment skills', which enables you to identify the extent to which formative assessment is already being practised in your school.

Training Activity: Taking Stock of Formative Assessment Skills (Appendix A5)

- Take stock of what formative assessment skills already exist amongst staff – this gives everyone a chance to consider the elements of formative assessment. It is a valuable audit tool.
- You can then complete a summary sheet to show which areas you feel you need to support. (At the same time, the audit also provides an opportunity for you to celebrate the skills that staff have developed already.)
- Finally, school managers can use the resulting information from the audit of skills to plan training needs for the whole school. Some of these may be met by expertise already in school (shown on the individual summary sheets) or by the provision of an external trainer.

Some key tips to ensure effective formative assessment

- ✓ The learning intentions must be shared with learners at the start of lessons in a manner that they can understand.
- ✓ Teachers need to check on learners' understanding at various points in the lesson rather than assuming they have absorbed the learning. Learners could hold up small white boards or green, amber or red signs (known as 'traffic lights') to indicate levels of understanding, or they could indicate by holding their thumbs up or down; learners could vote for a correct/incorrect supposition; questions could be targeted by the teacher.
- ✓ Teaching is fine-tuned during the lesson and between lessons, according to what the teacher finds out about the students' learning. There is little point, for example, moving on to the next step of a lesson plan if learners have not fully understood the first stage.
- ✓ Questioning is a key way in which teachers can find out about students' learning. A 'question slot' could be a routine part of each lesson where students are given a chance to ask any question they want about points of learning. They could be issued with question stem cards stating the question roots: 'How?' 'What if?' 'Why?' and they could be rewarded/praised each time they use them. Learners should be given waiting time before they answer questions. Learners should be told questions in advance so that they have a chance to think about them. Learners can also be allowed to collaborate before answering as this is often less intimidating in a classroom environment.
- ✓ Learners need to know what a successful response looks like. Teachers could model what the success criteria look like – for example, modelling a piece of good writing on the board, or providing examples of learners' work.
- ✓ Teachers should find time to present opportunities within normal lesson time for learners to talk about what they have learned and what they have found difficult, using the learning intentions as a focus.
- ✓ Learners can be involved in both self and peer assessment. For example, learners could carry out a task based on what they have learned, then either they or their partner could mark it against the Success Criteria. However, self and peer assessment are only possible if

learners are given access to the success criteria associated with the task in hand and then encouraged to become actively self-monitoring. Answer cards may be given to the students to mark their own work.

- ✓ Feedback should be provided, both oral and written, that shows learners when success criteria have been met and what they still need to do to improve. Time spent in marking can be reduced by providing learners with the success criteria in advance, which can then be written at the top of their work or stuck in alongside it. Formative marking can then simply be a matter of highlighting/ticking evidence of these. A 'closing the gap' comment could be, 'Success criteria met of x, and y. Look at where I have highlighted y. I would like you to re-write these sentences including a noun phrase in each. Complete by Friday.' If a learning issue persists, it should become a personal SMART target for the learner. The following example of a learner's work makes this clear.

Learning intention: to identify (underline) present participle verbs and preposition in dramatic writing and to comment on how they impact on meaning

Fog everywhere. Fog up ✓ the river, where it flows among ✓ green meadows; fog down ✓ the river, where it rolls defiled among ✓ the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollutions of ✓ a great (and dirty) city. Fog on ✓ the Essex marshes; fog on ✓ the Kentish heights. Fog creeping ✓ in the cabooses of collierbrigs; fog lying out on ✓ the yards, and hovering on ✓ the rigging of ✓ great ships; fog drooping on ✓ the gunwales of ✓ barges and small boats. Fog in ✓ the eyes and throats of ✓ ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by ✓ the firesides ✓ in their wards; fog in ✓ the stem and bowl of ✓ the afternoon pipe ✓ of the wrathful skipper, ✓ down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers ✓ of his shivering little 'prentice boy on ✓ deck. Chance people ✓ on the bridges peeping ✓ over the parapets ✓ into a nether sky ✓ of fog, ✓ with fog all ✓ around them, as if they were up? in a balloon, and hanging in? the misty clouds.

I think the reason why the writer has used a lot of prepositions and participle verbs is to make the description of the fog more interesting

John, you have identified all the present participle verbs and prepositions correctly, (apart from two you missed out), but you have not thought carefully enough about WHY the writer has used so many of these. Think about it. He has the fog everywhere. What job do prepositions do? Write your answer below. I will give you some time to do this in the next lesson.

Student writes the learning intention at the top of their work

Student completes task – which has been stuck into their book

Teacher ticks correct identification

Student writes why he thinks the techniques have been used

Teacher comments on learning, giving student clear targets on gaps in learning so that these can be filled