Assessment for Learning

Using information from assessment to improve learning

In a nutshell:

Do your pupils know …

Where they are now?
Where they need to be?
What they need to do to get there?

Objectives

Questioning

The four elements of Assessment for Learning

Oral & Written
Feedback

Self and Peer
Assessment

Objectives	Use questioning in plenary to check pupils have achieved objectives.	Questioning

Comments must be related to the objectives

Pupils are better equipped to deal with this difficult task if they have good questioning skills

Developing and directing your questions is a form of oral feedback

Help pupils to recognise what successful work looks like

Oral and written feedback	You model good feedback skills for the pupils to develop their own	Peer and self assessment

Inside the black box: raising standards through classroom assessment
Paul Black & Dylan Williams (1998)
This short and easy to read pamphlet gives you everything you need to know about assessment for learning.
It was followed by *Assessment for Learning: beyond the black box* which is available free online at http://k1.ioe.ac.uk/tlrp/arg/publications.html

Assessment **of** learning is also known as **summative** assessment
Assessment **for** learning is also known as **formative** assessment

Objectives

- Share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of the lesson
- Use language that pupils can understand
- Use the objectives as the basis for questioning and feedback during plenaries
- Check how far objectives have been met in order to plan future lessons
- Use objectives to create success criteria
- Show pupils' work that has met success criteria
- Model what successful work should look like

Questioning

- More effort has to be spent in framing questions that are worth asking
- Increase wait time to several seconds
- Ask questions that help pupils to reflect on their thinking and learning process
- Plan sequences of questioning to develop pupils' thinking

Oral & Written Feedback

- Oral feedback is as important as written
- Ensure feedback is constructive and positive
- Comments should identify what the pupils has done well, what needs to be done to improve and how to do it
- Feedback needs to identify the next steps
- Feedback should be focused on the learning objectives

Self & peer assessment

- Give pupils clear opportunities to talk about what they have learned, what they found difficult
- Encourage pupils to work/discuss together, focusing on how to improve
- Ask pupils to explain the steps in their thinking (how did you get that answer?)
- Give pupils time to reflect on their learning
- Work with pupils to identify the next steps in learning
- The way you assess should be so transparent that pupils should be able to do it
- Pupils need to be taught the habits and skills of collaboration in peer assessment

Objectives & learning outcomes

Do your pupils know what they are intended to learn and what success will look like?

Objectives are about what you want the pupil to learn,
not about the tasks or activities you are going to do

Learning outcomes

Use one of these stems to let the pupils know what you expect from them

We	**W**hat	**T**o
Are	**I** am	**B**e
Learning	**L**ooking	**S**uccessful
To	**F**or	**Y**ou

or show pupils some examples of work and discuss them

or use questioning to help pupils to understand what is expected

What do we already know that will help you?

To produce a good … what do you think you will need to do?

How will you make sure that … ?

Process Success Criteria

- To avoid objectives and outcomes that are about activities, not learning, try this.
- Separate out the skill/knowledge that you want pupils to learn from the context you will use. For example;

Learning Objective	Context	Success Criteria
To share a quantity into a ratio	Worksheet	Remember to: ▫ Add the parts ▫ Write the ratio as a fraction ▫ Multiply each fraction by the whole
To know ways of controlling drought	Savannah grassland	Remember to: ▫ List the different causes of drought ▫ Explain how these could be reduced ▫ List your recommendations for how people can cope and live with drought ▫ Make comparisons with "drought" in the UK

Closed skills tend to have chronological success criteria

Open skills tend to have ingredient style success criteria

Useful verbs for writing objectives

Look for the verb which fits best with your objective …
   … then move down the column to make the objective more challenging

draw	state	record	recognise	identify
sort	describe	select	present	locate information from text
decide	discuss	define	classify	explain how
devise	calculate	interpret	construct	clarify
plan	predict	conclude	solve	determine the key points from
formulate	explain why	use the pattern to …	reorganise	explain the differences between
link/make connections between	use the idea of … to …	use a model of … to …	provide evidence for	evaluate the evidence for

Verbs to AVOID when writing objectives

Avoid verbs that don't describe learning

discuss — **Procedures** — fill in
listen — **Tasks** — gather
complete — **Activities** — annotate

become aware of — **Vague** — empathise with
experience — **Unspecific** — understand
know — **Unfocused** — realise

Questioning

What makes questions effective?

- Put two or three key questions in your plan. Sequence the questions to get increasingly challenging
- Link questions to the lesson objectives (you could put them in the scheme of work)
- Teach basic skills through questions that break the skill down into small steps
- Have more open, higher order questions than anything else
- Phrase closed questions so that they are low risk (eg instead of saying "what is the answer?" say "what do you think is the answer")
- Give pupils opportunities to ask their own questions
- Give pupils the opportunity to feedback to each other
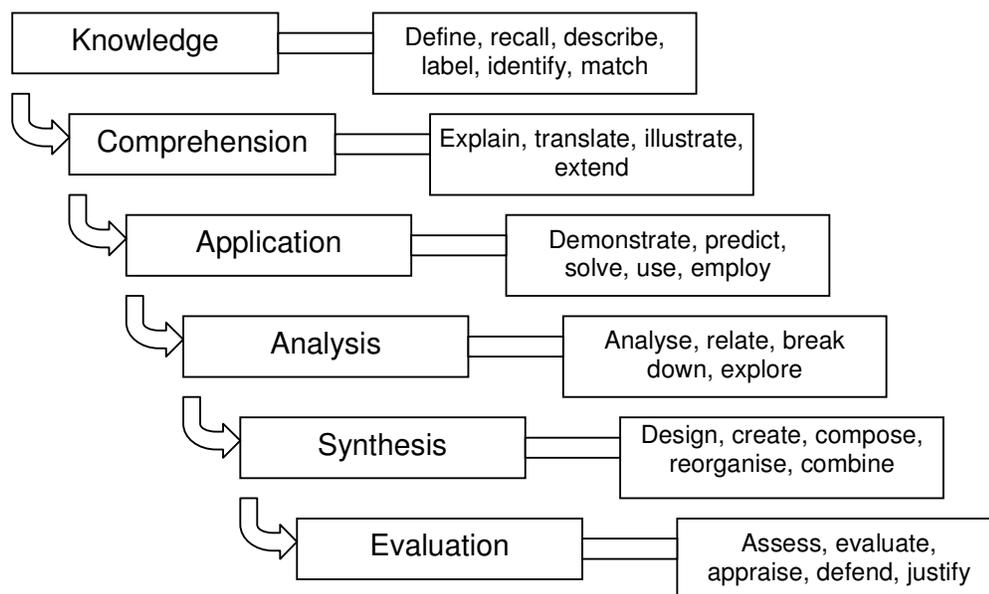- Make sure that risks are acceptable in your classroom

Some good questions …

What?   How?   When?

- How did you work that out?
- Why do you think that?
- What makes this a good …?
- What could we do to improve this …?
- What do you think …?
- What do you think would happen if …?
- What are you expecting?
- How do we know that?
- What is he really saying?
- How else would you …?
- Which is more important?
- What do you notice?

Where?   Why?   Who?

Tactics for creating a good climate for questioning

No Hands no-one puts their hands up, the teacher picks a pupil to answer. They are allowed to say they don't want to answer	**Collaboration time** pupils discuss their answer with another pupil before replying	**How did you get that** question an apparently incorrect answer, it may come from some very good thinking, may even be correct!
Wait Time if there is no answer don't answer it yourself or rephrase it. Wait a few seconds instead.	**Write/Draw and Show** pupils have mini whiteboards, coloured cards or any relevant cards/objects which they select and show to answer the question	**Left /right hand** give pupils two or more different gestures as responses (e.g. to express like or dislike, agree, disagree, true or false)

How to plan a sequence of increasingly challenging questions
(based on Bloom's Taxonomy)

Knowledge	Define, recall, describe, label, identify, match

Comprehension	Explain, translate, illustrate, extend

Application	Demonstrate, predict, solve, use, employ

Analysis	Analyse, relate, break down, explore

Synthesis	Design, create, compose, reorganise, combine

Evaluation	Assess, evaluate, appraise, defend, justify

Vocab:

Open questions: There are a variety of acceptable answers. Thinking skills.

Close Questions: There is only one (or a few) correct answer. Factual recall.

Lower order questions: Factual, descriptive, easy questions.

Higher order questions: Sophisticated thinking, harder questions.

Top Tips:

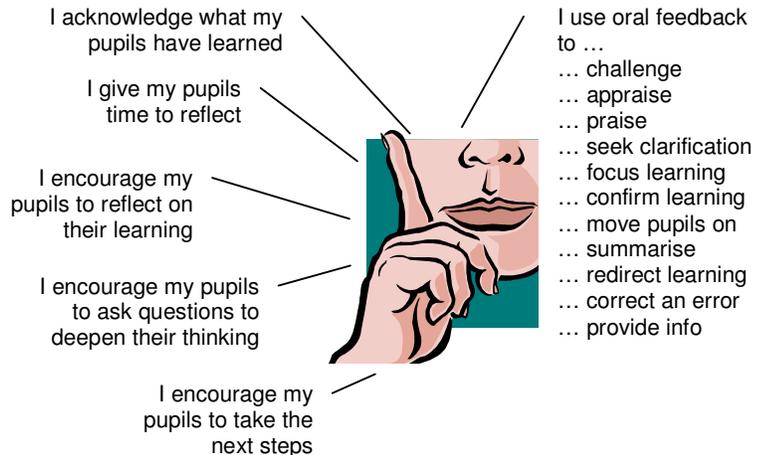|		
Always think … why am I asking this?	Do I always plan sequences of questions to get increasingly challenging?	Do I give pupils time to answer?
Have I got strategies to make sure that every pupil feels included (no one pupil dominates)?	Is the answer obvious (or is it a "guess what's in my head" type question)?	If a pupil's response seems wrong or odd do you ask further questions to understand the pupils thinking?

Feedback

Identifying learners' strengths and giving clear constructive advice on areas for improvement

Oral feedback
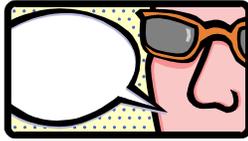
Oral feedback is …
- ❑ the most regular form of feedback
- ❑ the most powerful form of feedback
- ❑ the most interactive form of feedback
- ❑ implicit in all lessons
- ❑ immediate
- ❑ context specific
- ❑ adaptable
- ❑ ongoing
- ❑ stimulating
- ❑ personalised

I acknowledge what my pupils have learned

I give my pupils time to reflect

I encourage my pupils to reflect on their learning

I encourage my pupils to ask questions to deepen their thinking

I encourage my pupils to take the next steps

I use oral feedback to …
… challenge
… appraise
… praise
… seek clarification
… focus learning
… confirm learning
… move pupils on
… summarise
… redirect learning
… correct an error
… provide info

What could go wrong?

I don't have time to think, so my comments aren't helpful and focused on learning objectives	Make sure you know what the learning objectives & success criteria are Keep asking until you know about the pupil's thinking
My pupils either don't listen or don't take my words seriously	It takes time to establish the value and importance of feedback. Keep at it! Give explicit training on ground rules of speaking & listening.
But what's the point of putting time and effort into it – there's no record, it's ephemeral	Yes it is, but think back to things teachers said to you at school – it stays with you, doesn't it? Ask pupils to reflect on what you've said, and to think about the way forward. Give them time to do this. And you could always make a quick note afterwards.
My pupils feel exposed by public feedback. They don't want to be a boffin or stupid in front of their peers.	Make sure pupils know that if you aren't making mistakes you aren't learning. Make sure everyone sees errors as learning opportunities Make opportunities for private or group feedback
I don't have time to give oral feedback to every pupil, so it isn't fair.	Give collective feedback to the class where possible Use groups or a rotation so that all pupils have time with you

Written feedback

Is it really worth the time it takes'?

Yes, but only if …	Don't bother with …
• you give your pupils time to read and respond to your comments • your comments enable pupils to identify the next steps in their learning and how to take them • your comments let pupils know how well they have met the learning objectives • your comments prompt thought and reflection	• marking low level tasks (e.g. notes) and closed questions (go through the answers in class) • focusing on rewards, grades or marks (keep them for your mark book) • comments that aren't about the success criteria that you told pupils about at the beginning of the task • writing loads but not giving the pupils time to read it and respond to it

Written feedback must include:

✓ Where the pupil has met the objectives

✓ Where the pupil still needs to improve

✓ A way to improve learning

✓ A way to think through the answer for themselves

Try to avoid giving grades. Seriously!

pupils may avoid tasks to avoid failure

pupils lose confidence

pupils compare themselves with each other

pupils become complacent

Good written feedback

Focuses on the learning objectives	Confirms pupils are on the right track	Motivates pupils to correct errors or improve their work	Supports pupils next steps
Provides opportunities for pupils to think things through themselves	Comments on progress over a number of attempts	Avoids comparison with other pupils	Gives pupils the opportunity to respond

To be effective feedback – oral or written - should cause thinking to take place

Self and Peer Assessment

Pupils reflecting on their work and working out how to improve it

What it isn't

- It isn't just marking your own work
- It isn't just marking each other's work
- It doesn't have to take loads of planning
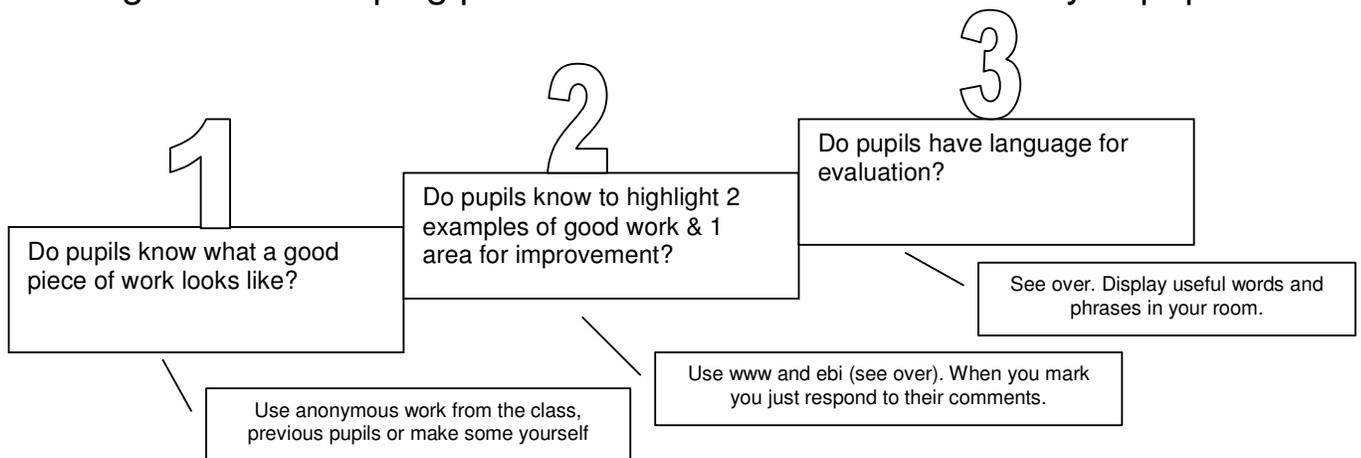- It's not a special thing to do every now and then

What it is

- Pupils judging how well they've done and what they need to do to improve
- Getting pupils to think about their learning and progress
- Helping pupils to become independent learners
- A part of every lesson

Nice idea, but not with these pupils ….

It is a difficult skill for most pupils,
but in the end it will save you time and effort as well as raising achievement

Stages for developing peer and self assessment skills in you pupils

1

Do pupils know what a good piece of work looks like?

Use anonymous work from the class, previous pupils or make some yourself

2

Do pupils know to highlight 2 examples of good work & 1 area for improvement?

Use www and ebi (see over). When you mark you just respond to their comments.

3

Do pupils have language for evaluation?

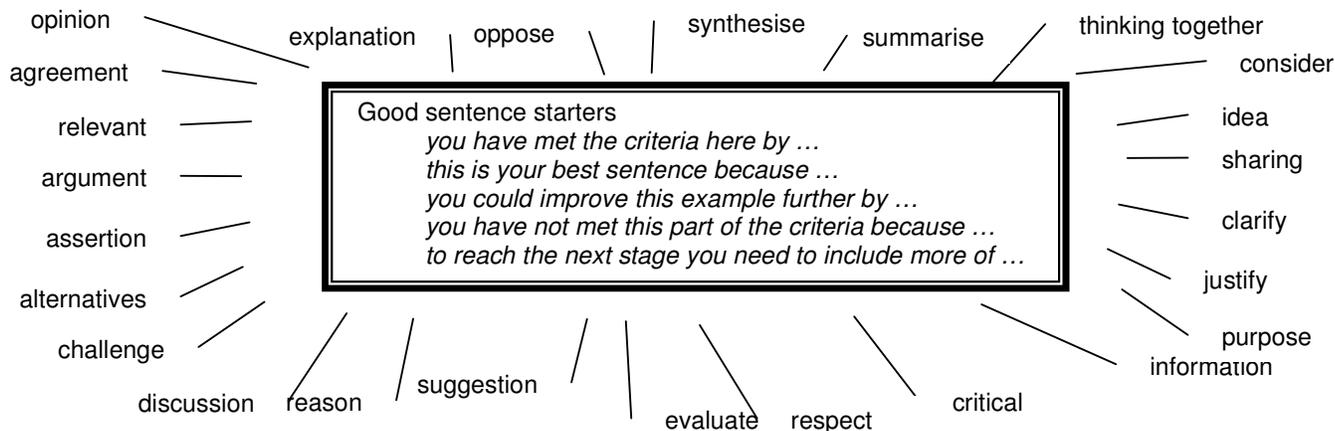See over. Display useful words and phrases in your room.

The simplest model for self assessment

1. you **model** it for the pupils (think aloud while critiquing a piece of work)
2. they **highlight** two examples within their own work where they have met the objectives
3. they highlight one area in their own work where they **could improve**
4. they make that **improvement**

For peer assessment it's exactly the same – just someone else's work

The language of self evaluation

opinion   explanation   oppose   synthesise   summarise   thinking together

agreement   consider

relevant   idea

argument   sharing

assertion   clarify

alternatives   justify

challenge   purpose

discussion   reason   suggestion   evaluate   respect   critical   information

```
Good sentence starters
    you have met the criteria here by …
    this is your best sentence because …
    you could improve this example further by …
    you have not met this part of the criteria because …
    to reach the next stage you need to include more of …
```

By the way … the most common problem is not pupils being arrogant and cussing everyone else. Actually they tend to put themselves down and offer superficial praise to their peers!

Tactics to help pupils to self and peer assess

w.w.w. and e.b.i. Ask pupils to list two things that they have done well (what went well) and one thing they need to do to improve (even better if …)	**Less is More** Sacrifice the quantity of the work you request in return for quality. If you were planning to give 30 minutes for written work, give 20 minutes for writing and 10 minutes for review.	**Green pens** Provide pupils with green pens to mark and proof read their own work. When you come to mark their work you are generally responding to their comments rather than initiating your own.	**Spot the Error** After you've marked work start the next lesson with some common errors on the board for pupils to identify. As well as spellings and factual inaccuracies, look at more complex misconceptions.
Skills not Content Think about lesson objectives in terms of the skills to be learned rather than the knowledge to be acquired.	**How good is that?** After you've marked work start the next lesson with a good example of work for pupils to say what is good about it.	**Pick your partners** Allow your pupils to pick their own partners so that they feel comfortable with giving and receiving feedback.	**Sub Vocalise** Get pupils to read back through their work to themselves (in a quiet mumbly voice). This will help them to instantly spot and correct their own mistakes.
Feedback Response Time Whenever you give work back, give pupils a few minutes to read /listen to and reflect upon through your comments.	**Traffic Lights** At the start of a new topic tell the pupils some key words. They show a red, amber or green card to show if they don't know, are unsure of or completely understand the word. Do again at the end.	**Left hand/right hand** Give pupils two or more different gestures as responses (e.g. to express like or dislike, agree, disagree, true or false)	**Listening Threes** One pupil listens and asks questions while another assesses his work. A third pupil listens and records. At the end the third pupil gives feedback. They then all change roles.

www.fionahogg.com