



Leading Assessment: Building Teacher Assessment Capacity

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Key Questions

- What is the current context of assessment reform?
- What is the importance of the teacher's role in promoting the learning power of assessment?
- What are the implications of assessment and 21st century learners for teachers?



Changing Climate

- The learning power of assessment
- Changing demands of assessment policy
- Building teachers' assessment and digital literacies
- International comparative analysis data
- National curriculum and assessment
- Standards-driven reform



Professional Standards for Teachers

- Assess student learning
- Provide feedback to students on their learning
- Make consistent and comparable judgements
- Interpret student data
- Report on student achievement

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

<http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au/>



Drivers for Increased Use of Evaluation and Assessment

- An increased requirement for effectiveness, equity and quality in education to meet economic and social demands.
- A trend in education towards greater school autonomy, which has led to a need to monitor schools' improvement.
- Developments in information technology, which allow for both large-scale and individualised student assessment and facilitate the sharing and management of data.
- Greater reliance on evaluation results for evidence-based decision making.

“Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment”
(OECD, 2013, p.13)



Recommendations from OECD Reviews

1. Integrate student assessment and school evaluation in a single framework which ‘articulates ways to achieve the coherence between its different components’;
2. Align assessment and evaluation with educational goals and learning objectives set out in the curriculum;
3. Design the accountability uses of evaluation and assessment in ways that minimise undesirable effects;



Recommendations from OECD Reviews

4. Use measures of performance that are broad enough to capture the whole range of student learning objectives;
5. Focus on improving classroom practices and build on teacher professionalism (...promote regular use of evaluation and assessment results for improvements in the classroom.);
6. Place student at the centre, the fostering engagement in learning through using formative assessment strategies.

(ARG & BERA, 2013)



Curriculum Developments

- Determining curriculum based on international tests
- Globalisation and futures-oriented curriculum
- Impact of the private sector on education
- Greater understanding of the connection of curriculum to both pedagogy and assessment
- Developments in learning and our understanding in relation to curriculum
- Professional role of teachers in assessment to support curriculum



Discussion Questions

- What are the current assessment reform issues in the Republic of Ireland?
- What are the implications for assessment leadership?
- How can the teacher's role in promoting the learning power of assessment be supported?



Value of Teacher Development

- Increase teacher assessment and digital literacies
- Continue with, and develop, teacher-based assessments that directly contribute to learning - involves teachers developing their theories of learning as the basis for a 'principled' understanding of learning and assessment
- Recognise that teacher assessment can itself be a source of dependable results through moderation practice
- Increase understanding beyond raw scores to appreciate the related equity issues



Interpretations of test results and issues of equity

- Measure something innate about the learner that indicates future learning potential
- People's knowledge is available in the same way
- Failure or inadequate answers interpreted as measures of lack of knowledge and or understanding
- The assessment item, and the internal process of individuals responding to it, viewed as separate from social and cultural influences
- Communication seen as monologic, meaning is singular
- Receiver is passive and extracts meaning in the words assessment constructs are, therefore, stable across children and adults and
- Assessment is a process of reading off the knowledge stored 'in the head' (Murphy, 2009).



Assessment

- Assessment has been defined as taking place whenever:... one person, in some kind of interaction, direct or indirect, with another, is conscious of obtaining and interpreting information about the knowledge and understanding, or the abilities and attitudes of that other person. (Rowntree, 1987: 4)



Achievement and Equity

There exists a strong association between a student's background and identity, and achievement, regardless of the level of schooling

(McCormick & Murphy, 2008; Murphy & Hall, 2008; Pryor & Crossouard, 2008).

Assessment information can therefore only provide an indicator or understanding of achievement: it is 'not actual achievement'

(McCormick & Murphy, 2008: 12).



Formative assessment

- Systematic evaluation in the process of curriculum construction, teaching, and learning for the purposes of improving any of these three processes (Bloom).
- ‘Formative assessment – the frequent assessments of student progress to identify learning needs and shape teaching’ (OECD, 2013)
- ‘All those activities undertaken by teachers and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged’. (Black & Wiliam, 1998)
- ‘The process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers, to identify where the learners are in their learning , where they need to get to and how best to get there (ARG, 2002)



Formative Purposes

- What is formative for the learners is in the moment as they act, this is what teachers need to observe.
- Cognition develops through understanding not to understanding (Rogoff, 1998)
- What learners 'know' about their learning is not available to them unless together with others they reflect on their actions and their meanings.
- Opportunities for dialogue essential and the experience of mutuality i.e. the ability to negotiate meaning. (Murphy, 2009)



Formative Purposes

- Judgements are part of learning located in the discourse, actions, transactions of individuals in participation
- Feedback should feed forward for both the students and their learning and the teacher about their practice.
- Focus is on changes in participation, therefore, need to observe the interactional plane to consider what was made available to learn for individuals.
- Formative insights map the transformation of understanding the movement through social practice.

(Murphy, 2009)



Formative Purposes

- The teacher provides feedback to the student about how to take the next steps in their learning, or may intervene to scaffold their learning - decision-level of assessment purpose (Newton, 2010)
- The teacher will engage the student in dialogue about their demonstrated knowledge, understanding and capabilities, as reflected in their work.



Discussion Questions

- How are teachers currently supported in their use of assessment practices and assessment data for a range of purposes?
- What levels of support exist to address equity issues in teacher-based assessment?



Teachers' Assessment Capabilities

- Bringing assessment to the fore in planning
- Connecting assessment with curriculum planning for learning and teaching
- Addressing the relevance of assessment in terms of validity – fitness for purpose
- Complementarity of assessment for formative and summative purposes (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2014)



Teacher Assessment

- Teacher designed assessment tasks need to involve:
 - a variety of contexts,
 - range of modes with the assessment,
 - range of response formats and styles,
 - range of indicators particularly to address issues of equity.



Features of Quality Task Design

- Alignment
- Intellectual challenge and engagement
- Assessment scope and demand
- Language used to communicate the task
- Literate capabilities involved in doing and completing the task
- Performance contexts
- Knowing what is expected both during and on completion of the task
- Student self-assessment for improvement
- Intended purposes of assessment information

(Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith 2014)



Validity

- “Validity is the most important quality of an assessment, but its evaluation is often neglected” – (Crooks, Kane & Cohen, 1996: 265)
- “The extent to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores entailed by proposed use of tests” (AERA/APA/NCME, 1999).
- Shift from seeing validity as a fixed property of a test to viewing validity as an argument about the appropriateness of the inferences made from the results



Teacher Assessment: Threats to Validity

Alignment

- How is the assessment instrument or task aligned with the formal curriculum and intended learning?
- Is the task designed for a single learning area or is it transdisciplinary drawing on two or more learning areas? Is there alignment between each curriculum and the associated assessment for all of the learning areas that are incorporated in the task?

Intellectual challenge and engagement

- What constructs (from a field of knowledge/learning areas or across fields/ learning areas) will students be involved in accessing, using and/or creating?
- What prior knowledges, skills and strategies are necessary for students to engage with the assessment instrument or task? (Without this, the task/instrument may build in failure from the outset).

Assessment scope and demand

- Does the task build in the opportunity for the teacher to discriminate among performances at different levels?

Performance contexts

- Is the time given to complete the task successfully adequate?



Teacher Assessment: Threats to Validity

Knowing what is expected both during and on completion of the task

- What access do students have to information about how the quality of what they do is judged? (standards descriptors, criteria)

Student self-assessment for improvement

- How are students enabled to monitor their progress – including time management and resource management?
- How are students enabled to monitor the quality of their work during production?

Intended purposes of assessment information

- What is the intended use of the assessment information generated by the task? (formative, summative or both)

(Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2014: 65-68)



Equity, Language and Layout

Alignment

- How does the assessment task/instrument require students to carry forward and build on prior learning? Does it enable students to demonstrate how they are carrying forward and connecting their prior learning to what they are currently learning?

Intellectual challenge and engagement

- What prior knowledge, skills and strategies are necessary for students to engage with the task?
- What are the dimensions or aspects of the task? Does it involve student in: locating, retrieving and re-presenting information, problem-solving, taking action, making a presentation to an audience?
- What are the cognitive, aesthetic, creative and critical aspects?
- Will the students see the assessment as worthwhile and as having relevance to them? (Does the task connect to communities of practice that students identify with outside of school? eg actual or virtual communities)
- What outside-school knowledge and experiences may influence how boys and girls engage with the task?

Assessment scope and demand

- What is the level of cognitive demand of the task? Is the task designed in such a way as to enable a heterogeneous group of students to achieve success at different levels?
- Is the task designed to meet a minimum requirement for success?



Equity, Language and Layout

Language used to communicate the task

- Is the task to be written or presented in ways that draw appropriately on the accepted terminology of the learning area/s?
- Is the wording of the task free of bias (gender, racial, cultural)?
- Is the language (written, spoken, visual) clear and accessible to all students, taking account of students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds?
- What, if any, prerequisite cultural and linguistic knowledges are called upon to access the intended meaning of the task?

Literate capabilities involved in doing and completing the task

- What curriculum literacies are required for successful completion of the task, and what literacies are being assessed? (How can these be made explicit for students and taught to them? eg core skills)
- What are the modes that student need to use to engage with the task? eg will students be accessing and using written, visual, auditory language as they progress through the task?
- Will tasks involve students working in one mode (eg writing) or will they be working multi-modally, both within and across modes (eg combining written, visual and auditory language)
- Will they need to use any digital technologies to be able to succeed at the task (eg searching the internet, software programs, online communication)?



Equity, Language and Layout

Performance contexts

- Does the task have any connection to students' outside-school experiences? If so, are the conditions for doing the school task simulating the conditions that students experience outside of school in a similar or related activity?
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- What resources, human and material will they need to access in order to do the task?
- Will these resources be available and accessed at school, during school time?
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- Will some additional resources need to be accessed outside school?

Knowing what is expected both during and on completion of the task

- What information is provided to students about how to progress through the task, checking for example, on use of resources and time?

Student self-assessment for improvement

- How are expectations of quality communicated to students?

Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith (2014: 65-68)



Discussion Questions

- What support currently exists for teachers in their efforts to adopt the uses of assessment into their daily practice?
- What is the priority in teacher assessment capability development that requires further support?

Support for Teachers - QCAA

QCAA has developed assessment and reporting advice and guidelines:

- principles of effective **curriculum and assessment** planning
 - high expectations for all students
 - alignment of teaching and learning, and assessment and reporting
 - Standards- and school-based assessment for learning
 - Balance of informed prescription and teacher **professional judgement**
 - planning a balanced assessment program for developing the components of an assessment folio for the purpose of making an on-balance judgement
 - developing assessment techniques, formats and conditions appropriate for quality assessment for each learning area
- monitoring student achievement and providing feedback.





Artifacts

- Annotated exemplars of tasks (tasks/folios) in Assessment Bank
- Achievement standards at subject/discipline level
- Guide to making judgements at task level
- Judgement artifacts – addressing judgement as professional practice
- Cognitive commentary

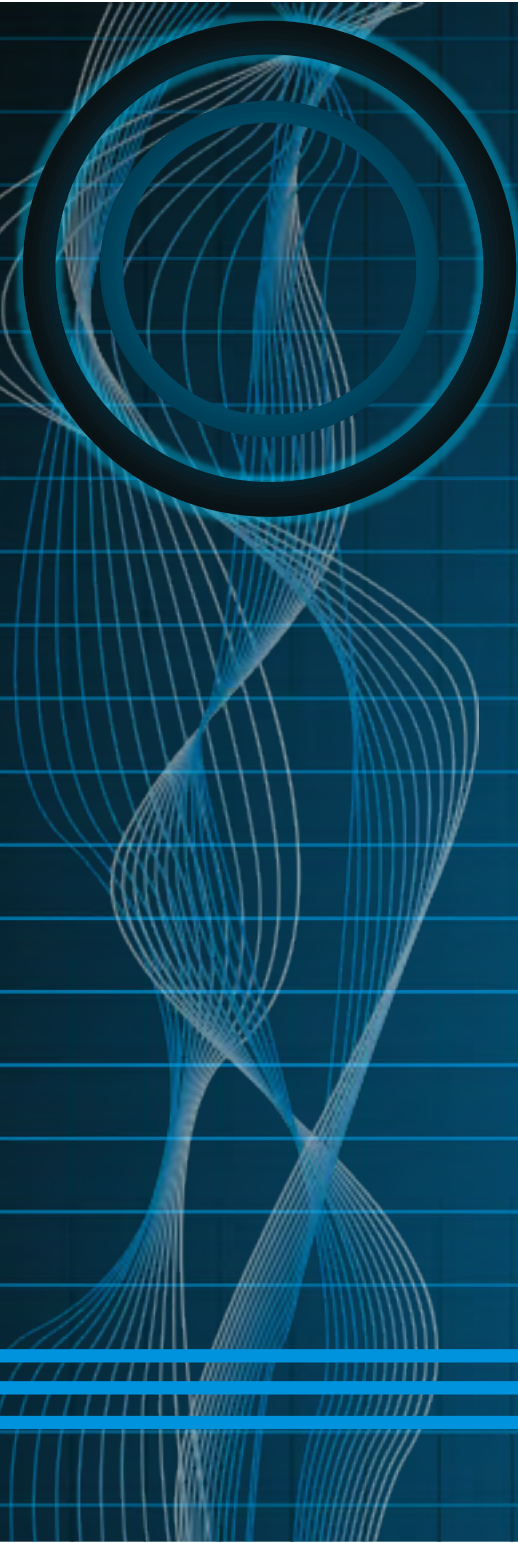
(Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2014)



Social Moderation and Judgement

- Principles, protocols and practices for relating student work to stated features of quality
- Role of facilitator ensuring all contributions are valued and points of difference are talked through

(Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2014)



Closing the Loop – carrying learning from assessment forward

- Student folios and related profiles for critical reflection on learning and determining future goals
- Assessment as a shared enterprise: inquiry, reflection and transformation
 - Learning and the learner at the centre
 - System artifacts – material resources
 - Human resources – including teachers, community members and industry (ie connection to the outside world)
 - Social moderation – judgement and categories of criteria to support metacognitive development

(Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2014)



Teacher Based-Assessment

- TBA is an important alternative to centrally devised tests because the teacher can address student's needs that emerge from a particular context, sociocultural or historical background
- Students' work is assessed at the local level and forms part of the assessment system of student performance
- Multiple judges are needed and moderation is necessary for dependability purposes



Implications for Practice

Inducting students into the same types of intellectual appraisal processes that experts use would substantially reduce need for teacher-derived feedback ... it would encourage students to adopt a holistic perspective of each work as a whole, and take into account both identifiable properties that rarely feature on criterion lists, and properties that are difficult or impossible to encapsulate in words. (Sadler, 2009b)



Implications for Practice

Developing evaluative expertise through guided practice would also equip learners to become self-critical and able to self-monitor their own work while it is in production, which ultimately is the very point at which it can make a difference to the work's quality.

(Sadler, 2009b)



Discussion Question

- What are the implications for you and your colleagues as leaders of assessment practice in your educational context given these developments in assessment?



thank you....

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