

Modelling Quality

Formative Assessment - Implications for Classroom Practice

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Active listening and focused observation are part of the good teacher's repertoire (TAFS) although skills may need to be developed in some other teachers.

Questioning as an assessment strategy has been discussed at school level in some schools (TAFS) but it is likely that much more work needs to be done. Really useful note-taking as part of observation will also require some examination and discussion.

There are implications for the frequency of assessment incidents of this type. 'Regular' is likely to be interpreted differently across schools. **However, there is a view from research (Fuchs and Fuchs) that assessment incidents need to be systematically planned and carried out between 2 to 5 times a week.**

Despite the recommendation (above) for dedicated focus group assessment time, the most common lesson structure (and likely to prevail) is the three-stage format:

- teacher introduction
- pupil activities
- plenary (TAFS)

During the pupil activities stage teachers circulate, at times stopping and using a range of teaching, assessment and feedback strategies with individual children (TAFS), with likely intentions and with various possible effects on the children (Torrance and Pryor).

If teachers were made more conscious of these episodes, the implications are that they could make even short interactions more formatively useful. Torrance and Pryor's 'the processes of formative assessment' is potentially a very useful reference.



Table 1	The processes of formative assessment (taken from Torrance and Pryor pp 160-161)	
<i>Description</i>	<i>Possible teacher intentions</i>	<i>Possible positive effect for pupil</i>
A T observes P at work (process)	Gain in understanding of why/how the pupil has approached or achieved task	Enhanced motivation due to t's attention
B T examines work done	Gain in understanding of what P has done	
C T asks principled question (seeks to elicit evidence of what P knows, understands or can do); P responds	Insight into P's knowledge, understanding or skills	Rehearsal of knowledge, understanding or skills; articulation of understanding to realise understanding
D T asks for clarification about what has been done, is being done or will be done; P replies	Gain in understanding of what P has done and of P's understanding of the task	Re-articulation of understanding, enhanced self-awareness and skills of summary, reflection, prediction, speculation
E T questions P about how and why specific action has been taken (meta process and meta cognitive questioning); P responds	Gain in understanding of why/how pupil has approached or achieved task, promotion of deeper understanding and 'handover'	Articulation of thinking - about-thinking; deeper understanding and handover
F T communicated task criteria (what has to be done in order to complete the task) or negotiates them with P	Communicating goals and success criteria; ensuring work is on target; adjusting the pace of work	Understanding of task and principles behind it
G T communicates quality criteria or negotiates them with P	Enhancement of quality of future work; promotion of greater independence	Understanding of notions of quality to aid future self-monitoring
H T critiques a particular aspect of the work or invites P to do so	Enhancement of quality of future work; promotion of greater independence	Articulating and interrogating quality criteria; enhanced understanding of quality issues; practice in self-monitoring
J T supplies information, corrects or makes a counter suggestion	Communication of alternative or more acceptable product	Enhancement of knowledge and/or understanding
K T gives and/or discusses evaluative feedback on work done with respect to: task, and or effort and or aptitude, ability (possibly with reference to future or past achievement)	Influence on P's attributions and therefore motivation of P for further work	Enhanced motivation and self-worth when realised in a context of empowerment; development of learning goals

Description	Possible teacher intentions	Possible positive effect for pupil
L T suggests or negotiates with P what to do next	Insight into ways forward for immediate further teaching of individual; refocusing P on curricular goals	Insight into ways to continue working and learning. Deepening understanding of process/principle
M T suggests or negotiates with P what to do next time	Insight into ways forward for planning of group activities	Deepening understanding of principle/process
N T assigns mark, grade or summary judgement on the quality of this piece of work or negotiates an agreed one with P	Information for summative assessment; communication of quality criteria; teaching/modelling skills of assessment for self-assessment	Information about present achievement with respect to longer term goals
P T rewards or punishes pupil, or demonstrates approval/disapproval	Improvement of maintenance of relationship with pupil; enhancement of motivation	Enhanced motivation