

George Green's School Expressive Arts Assessment and Feedback Policy

EXPRESSIVE ARTS ASSESSMENT WITHOUT LEVELS

1. Introduction

*"Most discussions of assessment start in the wrong place. The most important assessment that goes on in a school isn't done to students but goes on inside students. Every student walks around with a picture of what is acceptable, what is good enough. Each time he works on something he looks at it and assesses it. Is this good enough? Do I feel comfortable handing this in? Does it meet my standards? **Changing assessment at this level should be the most important assessment goal of every school. How do we get inside students' heads and turn up the knob that regulates quality and effort.**"*

Ron Berger, 'An Ethic of Excellence'

*"In the end, it all comes down to the relationship between the teacher and the student. To give effective feedback, the teacher needs to know the student—to understand what feedback the student needs right now. **And to receive feedback in a meaningful way, the student needs to trust the teacher—to believe that the teacher knows what he or she is talking about and has the student's best interests at heart. Without this trust, the student is unlikely to invest the time and effort needed to absorb and use the feedback.***

The only thing that matters is what the student does with the feedback. If the feedback you're giving your students is producing more of what you want, it's probably good feedback. But if your feedback is getting you less of what you want, it probably needs to change"

Dylan Williams <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr16/vol73/num07/The-Secret-of-Effective-Feedback.aspx>

2. General Principles for assessment

"Our first point of principle should be to hold on to aspects of assessment that aim to measure what we value rather than simply valuing what we are able to measure."

General Principal 1. The Curriculum comes first.

Decide on the important parts of the curriculum and design assessment so that it makes clear who has covered the curriculum in appropriate depth and which students still need to cover the curriculum.

Dylan Williams argues there is a need to consider content and be clear about the Big Ideas in our subjects – he suggests we should try and keep them to around 5-10. He shows how we can use learning pathways that outline how students might develop understanding of these ideas. From these learning pathways we consider assessment points.

Tim Oates argues to assess correctly we need to be aware of the importance of

- *Constructs*
- *Peer Support*
- *Production (Ensure that students make and create lots of work/stuff)*
- *Practice (Ensure that students get plenty of opportunities to practice skills.)*

Constructs

E.g.

The learner multiplies two three digit numbers together. The learner understands and is inventive with metaphor. The learner uses the concept of inequality to analyse social relations. The learner understands conservation of mass. The learner is able to keep in time with a groove. The learner is able to stay in role when acting

*Asking a series of questions enables us to assess whether someone has understood these constructs. **Constructs should be the focus of our learning objectives and our assessment.***

General Principal 2. Relate assessment to the specifics of the curriculum:

“We believe that it is vital for all assessment, up to the point of public examinations, to be focused on which specific elements of the curriculum an individual has deeply understood and which they have not.”

p50, [The Framework for the National Curriculum A report by the Expert Panel for the National Curriculum review](#) December 2011

This video – featuring Tim Oates – outlines the issues with levels.

[Assessment Without Levels in Depth – Cambridge Assessment – Tim Oates](#)

He argues that when you look at other successful countries they focus assessment on whether they have understood a key concept or idea. They study fewer things (particularly in primary) in greater depth.

This approach to assessment he compares to an approach based on levels.

- He notes that levels become a label. Children compare themselves as levels. However we need an approach that sees all students as capable of succeeding. (A growth mindset)
- Instead of thinking as a teacher they can't do this “because they are a level 3” we now think can I teach this differently so they do understand?
- Levels encourage undue pace (rapid progress etc)
- Being within any level is understood differently – best fit, just in, specific mark.

General Principal 3. Avoid high stakes assessment

Campbell's Law

“Campbell's law was formulated in 1975 by the late Donald T. Campbell, a respected social psychologist, evaluator, methodologist, and philosopher of science. Campbell's law stipulates that “the more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor.”

Put another way, the higher the stakes, the more likely it is that the construct being measured has somehow been changed. High stakes, therefore, lead inexorably to invalidity.

Examples of corruption, cheating, gaming the system, taking short cuts, and so forth are found wherever high stakes are attached to performance in athletics, academia, politics, government agencies, and the military.”

High-Stakes Testing and the Corruption of America's Schools by SHARON L. NICHOLS AND DAVID C. BERLINER

General Principle 4. Use models not criteria – focus on comparisons not absolute judgements.

Not levels – generic criteria. But look to the specific (**exemplars of student work**)

Criteria Based assessment	Exemplar based assessment
Look at the work produce and make reference to the grading criteria.	Looks at the work and then discusses this in terms of the models and exemplar work.
When moderating look at how the work produced fits with grading criteria.	When moderating discussion is focused on comparing the work to each other – focus on relative quality

The criteria don't disappear but are now discussed in terms of the sophistication of the work not the sophistication of the speaker relating the work to the criteria. This is based on the idea we are better at making comparative judgements than absolute judgements.

Christoudoulou argues this view in her [blog](#).

Ron Berger notes how it's impossible to think of a skilled profession that does not rely on clear models, critique and feedback.

"These on going feedback practices, which help us improve, are essential in nearly every field. Despite its prevalence in the world, this kind of on-the-job, on-the-spot feedback based on strong models, is still strangely absent from many school."

Ron Berger "Leaders of their own learning."

Daisy on Comparative Judgement: Recognising Tacit Knowledge

*I have done some trial judging with No More Marking, and at first, it feels a bit like voodoo. If, like most English teachers, you are used to laboriously marking dozens of essays against reams of criteria, then looking at two essays and answering the question 'which is the better essay?' feels a bit wrong – and far too easy. But it works. **Part of the reason why it works is that it offers a way of measuring tacit knowledge. It takes advantage of the fact that amongst most experts in a subject, there is agreement on what quality looks like, even if it is not possible to define such quality in words. It eliminates the rubric and essentially replaces it with an algorithm. The advantage of this is that it also eliminates the problem of teaching to the rubric: to go back to our examples at the start, if a pupil produced a brilliant but completely unexpected response, they wouldn't be penalised, and if a pupil produced a mediocre essay that ticked all the boxes, they wouldn't get the top mark. And instead of teaching pupils by sharing the rubric with them, we can teach pupils by sharing other pupils' essays with them – far more effective, as generally examples define quality more clearly than rubrics.***

*The high level of agreement between all teachers at this comparative judgment session (and on all the others we have run) also shows us that **judging writing and even judging creativity are perhaps not as subjective as we might think. It is not the judgments themselves that are subjective, but the prose descriptors we have created to rationalise the judgments.***

General Principle 5. Use critique and descriptive feedback – work together (with your students) to define the qualities of good work.

Students need opportunities to critique and discuss models and exemplars. We need to have two different kinds of critique/feedback

1. **Sessions to build common understanding** of skills/quality/knowledge required. Group session building dialogue and a common understanding of goals/success criteria.
 - Use models.

1. **Feedback to the student so that we can improve individual work directly.** Looking at how the student can progress to the standard
 - Both types of feedback designed to give students models to aim for.
 - Criteria are fine but to understand what makes a good 8 bar improvised solo we need to hear it.
 - When students are working they can be redirected to the agreed standards (success criteria)
 - A process of continuous improvement, redrafts, resubmissions.
 - Keeping a shared class vision of the standards helps students to gain a sense of ownership.

*“Critique and descriptive feedback emphasize skills of critical analysis and self-assessment and ask students to make important decisions about their work and learning. Because the path to meeting learning targets is clearly defined by **a sharp vision of what quality looks like**, students can work independently and build skills confidently. “*

Ron Berger chapter 4 (**Ron Berger see chapter 4 of Leaders of their own Learning**)

At the classroom level, respectful and helpful critique and descriptive feedback can be incorporated every day into all aspects of schooling improving the quality of student understanding, work, effort, and character. Students learn to self-critique and critique others, respectfully and helpfully, as part of a productive learning environment. As the practices are implemented more consistently across classrooms in a school and understood and used more effectively by teachers, they are tightly aligned to standards and more closely integrated as part of a student-engaged assessment system.

General Principal 6. Oral feedback is an essential, ephemeral process - integral to successful teaching in the Expressive arts.

The way in which effective feedback is achieved in the Expressive Arts is by thinking about all of the small decisions, judgements, and observations which the teacher makes during the course of the lesson as being assessments for learning.

Sometimes these can seem so obvious that teachers in the past have not considered them to be assessments at all, but these interventions are the things which will make a difference to the ways in which pupils work and achieve in their Expressive Arts lessons.

Adapted from Martin Fautley

2. The Sooner the Better

Numerous studies indicate that feedback is most effective when it is given immediately, rather than a few days, weeks, or months down the line. In one study that looked at delayed vs. immediate feedback, the researchers found that participants who were given immediate feedback showed a significantly larger increase in performance than those who had received delayed feedback.

Another research project from the University of Minnesota showed that students who received lots of immediate feedback were better able to comprehend the material they had just read.

<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/tips-providing-students-meaningful-feedback-marianne-stenger>

The quality of dialogue in feedback is important and most research indicates that oral feedback is more effective than written feedback. QCA Characteristics of AFL

Giving feedback involves making time to talk to pupils and teaching them to be reflective about the learning objectives and about their work and responses. QCA Characteristics of AFL

General Principal 7 – Capture assessment through video and pictures.

To capture the workshop nature of the Expressive Arts will require videoing and archiving of work. It is generally not satisfactory for a written evaluation to cover the nuances of performances. **Archiving and videoing should not be at the expense of the crucial ongoing dialogue and feedback.** The art department will need to photograph samples of work.

Effective assessment in music takes account of the practical workshop nature of the subject in which information is collected and stored while pupils are involved in acquiring and applying musical skills. OFSTED 2003

General Principle 8. We need rich formative dialogue based on trusting relationships – a feedback that causes thinking rather than emotional reactions.

Assessment is improved largely through careful pedagogy - valuing formative conversations with students - assessment involves having a sensitive conversation in such a way that we place a real value on the personhood of the student. (Jon Finney)

We are trying to work together to share a common goal of excellence. Good assessment is a fundamental part of good pedagogy that is aware of the dangers of reducing complex real life, artistic production and creativity to numbers or abstract criteria. This is what we are trying to do as a faculty in our approach to assessment - build up our capacity to promote useful conversations with students that move them forward and energise their commitment to and understanding of the Arts.

Errors need to be welcomed. Feedback is most effective when students do not have proficiency or mastery and thus it thrives when there is error or incomplete knowing and understanding. Hattie

But the research shows that **the kind of formative assessment that has the biggest impact on student learning is short cycle formative assessment.** Basically, if you're not using information to make a difference to your teaching within a day or two then it's unlikely to make a difference to student achievement. It's the short cycle formative assessment that really matters, minute by minute, and day by day.

Dylan Williams

http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=comment%20only%20feedback%20dylan%20williams&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CDgQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dylanwilliam.org%2F_Dylan_Williams_website%2FPapers_files%2FCambridge%2520AfL%2520keynote.doc&ei=BS54UveLIKTY7AabhoD4CA&usg=AFQjCNHKhS5KlvCjI4RYIAYCdxAnsV66xg&bvm=bv.55819444,d.ZG4

General Principle 9: Focus on ensuring that your feedback gets acted upon so that students are given a chance to improve their performance.

“When we realize that most of the time the focus of feedback should be on changing the student rather than changing the work, we can give much more purposeful feedback. If our feedback doesn't change the student in some way, it has probably been a waste of time.”

The only thing that matters is what the student does with the feedback. If the feedback you're giving your students is producing more of what you want, it's probably good feedback. But if your feedback is getting you less of what you want, it probably needs to change.

General Principle 10: Start from where the learner is, not where we would like the learner to be - and give feedback that will move the student's learning forward

To do this try:

1. Assign Tasks That Illuminate Students' Thinking

“To be sure, no matter how carefully or deeply you probe, you can never make thinking wholly visible. Sometimes you're going to get it wrong. But at least by trying to get a handle on the student's thinking, you're giving yourself the chance to get it right more often than not.” Williams

2. Build Students' Capacity for Self-Assessment

Instrumental music teachers commonly get only 20 to 30 minutes each week with a student. But these teachers realize that most of the progress a student makes in playing a musical instrument happens when the student practices at home. A student could improve his or her performance very little in 30 minutes a week. Therefore, many instrumental music teachers spend most of their instructional session ensuring that students have the skills to practice productively—which requires that students can evaluate how well they've performed and make adjustments accordingly. Contrast this approach with most content-area teaching in schools, where teachers seem to believe that students make most of their progress when the teacher is present, with homework as a kind of optional add-on.

It's important, therefore, to develop students' capacity for self-assessment.

Williams

2. Badges a summary:

*The badges system is partly a simple tracking system. (Badges are either Locked/unlocked) We can focus on the key concepts/outcomes we require at key stage 3 using this standards based comparative judgement model. **It is designed to keep a record of the main things you want the students to have achieved – the badges you award are based on what you believe has value in the curriculum.***

***Awarding a Badge is not "the assessment";** badges track complex, nuanced formative assessment decisions.*

***The badges should ideally support your pedagogy** rather than being the engine motivating students. (Extrinsic rewards are limited in impact; intrinsic motivation is the way we are heading.) The badges take meaning and come to life as a result of the shared dialogue around quality you hold as a classroom teacher. See Principle 5 above. Without this dialogue and conversation the badges will not hold much meaning.*

***The badges system should encourage greater** dialogue between students and between staff and students around issues of quality.*

***Badges are a way of communicating standards and expectations through models** – and badges rely on using comparative judgements rather than absolute judgements (criteria based standards are notoriously slippery and prone to wide variations)*

Assessment is improved largely through careful pedagogy** - valuing formative conversations with students. We want the badges to work in a way so that they promote more dialogue - sensitive conversations with our students around issues of quality. **Our formative conversations show how we value the student's views and aspirations, recognise their individuality and uniqueness. This is "the assessment.

*With the model in mind **we work together as a class improving and redrafting work** (as recommended in Leaders of their own Learning.)*

***We are sharing a common goal of excellence (through models and continue redrafting)** Good assessment is a fundamental part of good pedagogy that is aware of the dangers of reducing complex real life, artistic production and creativity to numbers or abstract criteria.*

*This is what we are trying to do as a faculty in our approach to assessment - **build up our capacity to promote useful conversations with students that move them forward and energise their commitment to, and understanding of the Arts.***

Using Badges and Achievements

In the Expressive Arts Faculty we use a Standards based "badge system" aiming to focus on what we see as important for student learning. (This has been adapted from [London Nautical School](#))

Each badge can be given a number of points 1, 2 3 and some may completed more than once.

Move toward **unlocking achievements.** (ref computer games)

Stage 1 (around year 7) – Stage 2 (around year 8) – Stage 3 (around year 9) (Stage 3 is linked to around an equivalent on a C) (Advanced Stage?)

The achievement is outlined as far as possible in terms of detailed exemplars. (General principal 4)

A by-product of this is that some students will fail. However Not Achieved Yet does not mean they will never achieve. (GP 3)

London Nautical School suggest the benefits are the following:

Advantages:

- Standards should be clear to students/staff/parents.
- A badge is either achieved or not
- Students can try for the same badge over different schemes of work.
- Teacher determines the success or not.
- Contestable – everyone can look at what is required and discuss the quality of the work against the standard/exemplar.
- Flexibility – achievements can be set for a range of learning.
- It should allow for more precision in discussion of work.
- They have achieved Playing in a group showing stage presence and “performing a solo piece of at least 16 bars accurately and fluently” or not. These aids department discussion not they are level 4b and making 2 sub levels of progress.
- Clearer to parents.
- Should aid moderation

Examples of our badges can be found at Georgegreensarts.com



To gain this badge you will need to have performed your cover song to a high standard and show a good level of rehearsal skills.

Your performance would:

Be expressive and convincing.

Be in time – all players are aware of each other and any occasional slips in timing are corrected without breakdown in the performance.

Be structured – either following the original structure or your own extended structure.

Show examples of good stage presence.

Be accurate – showing only occasional slips

You would show good rehearsal skills by

Showing in lessons that you are able to set realistic achievable targets and work on them independently.

Assessment for Learning in the Expressive Arts –Some thoughts

“Assessment for learning is a way of thinking about the work that pupils do in a way which will have a direct benefit to them in the future. This distinguishes it from summative assessment, which essentially looks back on the work that pupils have done, and provides a mark or a grade for it.”

Martin Fautley

Key principles for assessment for learning were established by the Assessment Reform Group to include the following aspects:

- it is embedded in a view of teaching and learning of which it is an essential part;
- it involves sharing learning goals with pupils;
- it aims to help pupils to know and to recognise the standards they are aiming for;
- it involves pupils in self-assessment;
- it provides feedback which leads to pupils recognising their next steps and how to take them;
- it is underpinned by confidence that every student can improve;
- it involves both teacher and pupils reviewing and reflecting on assessment data. (in our case the music, drama or art work that they are currently working on)

5. OFSTED and Assessment

THE OFSTED REPORT: MUSIC IN SCHOOLS: WIDER, STILL AND WIDER OF 2011 SUGGESTED:

THE MOST EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICE OBSERVED HELPED STUDENTS TO LISTEN MORE ACCURATELY TO THEIR OWN WORK, HELPED THEM IDENTIFY FOR THEMSELVES WHERE IMPROVEMENTS WERE NEEDED, AND SHOWED THEM HOW TO IMPROVE THROUGH EXPERT MUSICAL MODELLING BY THE TEACHER... A WELL-ORDERED CATALOGUE OF RECORDINGS OVER TIME, SUPPORTED BY COMMENTARIES AND SCORES, PROVIDES A VERY EFFECTIVE AND COMPELLING WAY TO DEMONSTRATE STUDENTS' MUSICAL PROGRESS.

PLEA FROM ROBIN HAMMERTON, OFSTED HMI

'...AS THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM LEVELS DISAPPEAR, I RESPECTFULLY ASK YOU NOT TO REPLACE THEM WITH ANOTHER SET OF NUMBERS'.

THEREFORE, USING LEVELS AND SUB LEVELS TO TRY TO PROVE PUPILS' ONGOING PROGRESS IN MUSIC DOESN'T WORK, AS OFSTED HAS POINTED OUT MANY TIMES. IT IS USUALLY SUPERFICIAL, TIME WASTING AND NEITHER RELIABLE NOR VALID. IT IS MOST CERTAINLY NOT ANY KIND OF 'OFSTED REQUIREMENT'. TO BE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR, OUR INSPECTORS DO NOT EXPECT TO SEE IT. THERE ARE NO, AND NEVER WERE, SUB LEVELS IN MUSIC ANYWAY, FOR GOOD REASON.

PEER AND SELF-ASSESSMENT SHOULD BE EMBED AS PART OF THE LOGICAL PROCESS OF SHARING MODELS AND GIVING OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTAIN BADGES.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

STUDENTS WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK TOWARDS BADGES IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR COMPLETION OF KEY ASPECTS OF THE CURRICULUM.

EACH SOL SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST ONE BADGE.

CLASS TEACHERS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAINTAINING ACCURATE RECORDS OF WHO HAS ACHIEVED THE BADGES FOR EACH SOL.

HOS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MODERATING THESE DECISIONS IN COLLABORATION WITH SUBJECT TEACHERS AT REGULAR INTERVALS. IT IS RECOMMENDED TO DO THIS AT THE END OF EACH CAROUSEL IN THE FIRST YEAR.

HOD WILL REQUEST A SAMPLE OF WORK FROM EACH SUBJECT AREA THAT HAS BEEN MODERATED AND AGREED TO REACH THE STANDARD REQUIRED FOR EACH BADGE.

6. A Summary of General Principals

1. Curriculum comes first.
2. Relate assessment to the specifics of the curriculum.
3. Avoid high stakes assessment
4. Use models over criteria, Comparison over absolute judgements.
5. Use critique and descriptive feedback – work together to define the qualities of good work.
6. Oral feedback is an essential, ephemeral process - integral to successful teaching in the Expressive Arts.
7. To capture the workshop nature of the Expressive Arts will require videoing and archiving of work.
8. We need rich formative dialogue based on trusting relationships – feedback that causes thinking rather than emotional reactions.
- 9: Focus on ensuring that your feedback gets acted upon so that students are given a chance to improve their performance.
- 10: Start from where the learner is, not where we would like the learner to be - and give feedback that will move the student's learning forward