

Writing hub

One assessment system,
many audiences

Getting the balance right



The place to boost writing skills!

How would you measure progress towards a marathon?



Sensible ideas

- Get a plan
- Start with shorter runs and build distance
- Spend time in the gym
- Yoga / Pilates
- Think about nutrition, sleep, equipment
- Monitor improvements on all of these activities



Less sensible ideas

- Run a marathon in every training session
- Record times
- If you are getting faster, that shows you are making progress



Formative & summative assessment

Formative assessment

- Aim is to provide helpful next steps.
- Assessment for learning
- Set learning goals
- Break down complex skills and isolate the parts so you can see which bits a pupil is strong or weak at
- Don't use grades!
- Use frequently

Summative assessment

- Aim is to provide an accurate shared meaning
- Assessment of learning
- Set performance goals
- Measure the complex skill itself – this is the end goal
- Use grades – which are essentially methods of communicating shared meanings
- Don't do too frequently



Accurate shared meaning?

Can compare two fractions to identify which is larger

Which is bigger: $\frac{3}{7}$ or $\frac{5}{7}$?

90% get this right

Which is bigger: $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{4}{5}$?

75% get this right

Which is bigger: $\frac{5}{7}$ or $\frac{5}{9}$?

15% get this right

Qtd in Wiliam, Principled Assessment Design, SSAT 2014



Helpful next steps?

‘I remember talking to a middle school student who was looking at the feedback his teacher had given him on a science assignment. The teacher had written,

“You need to be more systematic in planning your scientific inquiries.” I asked the student what that meant to him, and he said,

“I don’t know. If I knew how to be more systematic, I would have been more systematic the first time.”

This kind of feedback is accurate—it is describing what needs to happen—but it is not helpful because the learner does not know how to use the feedback to improve. It is rather like telling an unsuccessful comedian to be funnier—accurate, but not particularly helpful, advice.’

Dylan Wiliam, Embedded Formative Assessment



Assessing without descriptors

Formative assessment

- Multiple-choice questions
- Whole-class feedback

Summative assessment

- Standardised tests & scaled scores
- Comparative Judgement plus AI

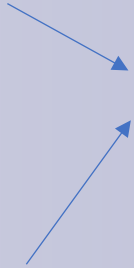


Multiple-choice questions

Multiple-choice questions

What is the capital of Moldova?

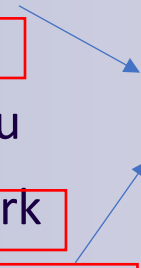
1. Baku
2. Tbilisi
3. Chisinau
4. Astana
5. Yerevan



**Unambiguously
wrong... but still
plausible!**

What is the capital of Moldova?

1. Paris
2. London
3. Chisinau
4. New York
5. Mexico City



**Unambiguously
wrong... but not
plausible!**

Create unambiguously wrong but plausible distractors!

What is 20% of 300?

a) 60

b) 20

c) 15

d) 30

Correct answer

Common pupil misconception: if you work out 10% by dividing by 10, then you must work out 20% by dividing by 20

“Students learn more when their teachers know the content, and when they can anticipate student misconceptions.”

Willingham, 2013



Multiple-choice questions

Don't start with the right answer – start with the misconception!!

1. Identify a misconception
2. Ask a question, and turn the misconception into a distractor
3. Add in some more distractors and add in the right answer!



Whole-class feedback



Whole-class feedback

Feedback from judging

Task: Narrative writing

What were the common misconceptions? Were there any mistakes made by lots of pupils? How could these inform the next lesson?

- Some persistent problems with tense, particularly near the end. Most of the descriptions started in the past tense, but some of them switched into the present tense, seemingly for dramatic effect. Jack's description is a good example of this:
 - *The boy played with the bucket and spade. The girl dug a hole in the sand with her hands. Suddenly a wave knocks them off their feet!*
- Could **display this next lesson with those two sentences highlighted, ask pupils to correct it and then see if they can spot a similar error in their own work.**
- Quite a few of the stories focused heavily on describing everything that could be seen in a way that become quite repetitive way and missed the opportunity to describe how the beach looked and / or the feelings of the tourists. **Repeat section from a few lessons ago on using adjectives to build suspense.**

Which pupils struggled in other ways?

- Jason wrote a story instead of a description – **repeat activity on purpose from a few lessons ago which included comparison of narrative and description – direct question on this in class to Jason.**
- Jill used quite a few slang words and phrases – **remind her about this, ask whole class what phrases they could use instead of 'don't even go there' and 'well chuffed'.**

Which pupils produced excellent work that could be shared with the class in the next lesson?

- Jane's description used the 'zoom' technique we have practiced in class really well – she zoomed in on a small child who was so engrossed in trying to catch a fish that he fell into the sea! – **share this.**
- James used the 'five senses' structure we have worked on in class, and gave some really original descriptions of the taste of the salt in the sea air blending with the salt on the fish and chips. **Share this on the visualiser.**



Whole-class feedback

Task: Narrative writing

What were the common misconceptions? Were there any mistakes made by lots of pupils? How could these inform the next lesson?

- Some persistent problems with tense, particularly near the end. Most of the stories started in the past tense, but when pupils got to the part where they described the alien landing, they switched into present for dramatic effect. Jack's story is a good example of this:
 - *The spaceship buzzed around the sky and then landed. Two aliens get out and threaten the locals!*
- Could **display this next lesson with those two sentences highlighted, ask pupils to correct it and then see if they can spot a similar error in their own work.**
- Lots of pupils used the word extraordinary to describe the alien landing, but lots misspelt it as 'extrordinary' – could **do quick activity on 'extra' as a prefix.**
- Quite a few of the stories focused heavily on action in a repetitive way and missed the opportunity to describe how the aliens looked and / or the feelings of the locals.
Repeat section from a few lessons ago on using adjectives to build suspense.

Whole-class feedback

Which pupils struggled in other ways?

- Jason wrote a newspaper report instead of a narrative – **repeat activity on purpose from a few lessons ago which included comparison of newspaper report and narrative – direct question on this in class to Jason.**
- Jill used quite a few slang words and phrases – **remind her about this, ask whole class what phrases they could use instead of 'don't even go there' and 'well chuffed'.**

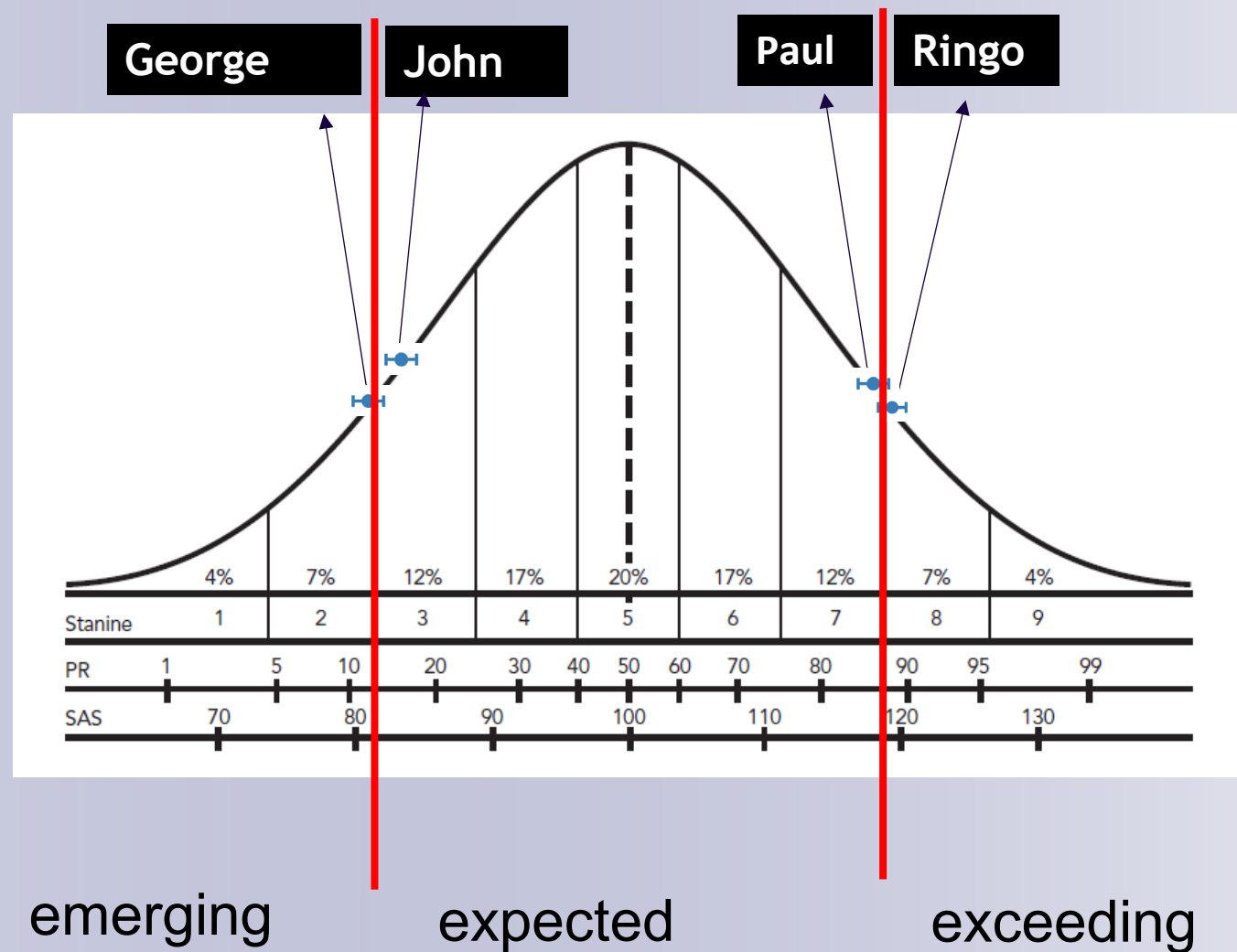
Which pupils produced excellent work that could be shared with the class in the next lesson?

- Jane's story had fantastic simile about how the alien's tentacles looked like strands of spaghetti slithering around a plate – **share this.**
- James structured his piece really well – good mix of narrative and description, and a clear ending as well. **Share the ending on the visualiser.**



Standardised scores

What is a grade?





Comparative Judgement



Why is judging absolute quality hard?



Working at the expected standard

The pupil can write for a range of purposes and

- creating atmosphere, and integrating detail into the action
- selecting vocabulary and grammatical structures required mostly correctly
- using a range of cohesive devices*, including linking words and paragraphs
- using passive and modal verbs mostly accurately
- using a wide range of clause structures, including complex sentence
- using adverbs, preposition phrases and other devices for detail, qualification and precision
- using inverted commas, commas for clause structure and other punctuation

In a perfect world, our school library would be able to offer everything that's possible and appropriate. But with budget limits throughout the school system, the administration must be sure they're making the best choices of books and magazines, so magazines like "Teen People" and "V" should not be paid for instead of educational books and publications.

The purpose of school, and school libraries, is learning. Supporters of popular magazines argue that there is something to be learned from any reading material, but I believe some kinds of learning are more important to students' futures than other kinds. If the school library has to choose between teaching teenage girls about the achievements of Harriet Tubman and letting them read about their favorite movie

Normally, we ask: does this piece of writing meet the criteria?

I've wanted to shoot a crow for
sometime now. I don't know why. I
feel this need. Something inside me tells
me to shoot the crows down. Is it
possible the ~~little~~ simple tunes I hear
from the birds... or maybe the crows
do they mock me? Look at that
wingless, footless, let's crow?
The crowing. The crowding. Maybe
my paranoia of the crows is linked
to that of the crowds (of other people).
Maybe it's the people I want to shoot
but then what is the song-bird singing?
I am protecting something. I do not
want to kill anything. If only your
music had more than just a chorus.
I cannot figure out the lyric. The
scientists and the doctors think they
can and they might know what
they think they know. I know that
I do not know. Who am I and
who are my friends: the song-bird, the
crow, my body, the crowds, the
scientists or the doctors? Do I even
have any? It is too probable that you

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Instead, we should ask, is this piece of writing
better than this piece of writing?

Comparative Judgement plus AI

- We can now combine human Comparative Judgements with AI Comparative Judgements
- This means a huge reduction in workload for teachers...
- ...but the human judgements are used to validate the AI judgements, and every piece of writing is still seen twice by humans.



Key principles

1. Distinguish between the end goal and the steps on the way.
2. Try not to use level descriptors to define the end goal or the steps on the way.
3. Use multiple-choice questions and whole-class feedback to define the steps on the way.
4. Use scaled scores & Comparative Judgement to define the end goal.



Applying these principles in a national system

- Summative assessment is ideally suited to national and central control. It's a collective action problem where government can add value!
- Formative assessment is best left up to teachers. Government can provide guidance and training.