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UNIT

5.2

ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING

Summative approaches

Kathy Hall and Kieron Sheehy

INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will have the chance to reflect on what summative assessment is, its uses and its potential impact on learners. You will also be able to consider some aspects of current policy on assessment. We start by considering some basic questions about summative assessment and by linking it with formative assessment. We will go on to identify purposes of summative assessment as well as sources of assessment evidence and we will explain what counts as good evidence of learning. We also describe current policy on assessment and reporting. We highlight some difficulties with 'high stakes' assessment and we finish by inviting your views on current assessment policy and practice.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- define summative assessment and relate it to formative assessment;
- explain why it is important to assess learners in a variety of contexts and know the kinds of assessment tasks that are effective in generating good evidence of learning;
- identify ways in which schools might use summative assessment information to feed back into teaching and learning;
- describe some aspects of the national policy on assessment and offer an informed opinion about the current emphasis on different assessment purposes and approaches.

WHAT IS ASSESSMENT AND WHY DO IT?

Assessment means different things in different contexts and it is carried out for different purposes. There is no simple answer to what it is or why we do it. Indeed one of the most important messages that we would like you to take away from this unit is that assessment is not a simple or innocent term. Assessing learning is not a neutral or value-free activity – it is always bound up with attitudes, values, beliefs and sometimes prejudices on the part of those carrying out the assessment and on

the part of those being assessed. When we make assessments of children's learning we are always influenced by what we bring with us in terms of our previous experiences, personal views and histories. Children's responses to assessment are influenced by what they bring with them – their previous experiences and their personal views.

Summative assessment sums up learning

Most recent sources on assessment refer to two important types. One is summative assessment, the other is formative assessment. Sometimes summative assessment is termed 'assessment of learning' (AOL) and in recent times formative assessment is associated with 'assessment for learning' (AFL). These newer terms are useful as they give an insight into the purpose of assessment that is involved in each case. In the previous unit (5.1) the area of formative assessment is addressed in more detail.

As the term implies, summative assessment tries to sum up a child's attainment in a given area of the curriculum. Summative assessment is retrospective: it looks back at what has been achieved, perhaps over a term, year or key stage. Formative assessment, on the other hand, is prospective: it looks forward to the next steps of learning. However, debate continues over whether and how summative and formative assessment should be distinguished (Black and Wiliam, 2007; Torrance, 2012). As we explain in a moment, we consider that the use to which assessment information is put is also helpful in determining whether it is labelled summative or formative.

SOURCES OF ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Assessing learning is about collecting information or evidence about learners and making judgements about it. The evidence may be based on one or more of the following:

- what learners say;
- what learners do;
- what learners produce.

The information or evidence may come from learners' responses to a test, such as a spelling test; a classroom activity, such as a science investigation; a game or a puzzle; or a standard assessment task or test like the SATs. It may come from a task or activity that is collaborative, that is, one where several pupils work together on the same problem. It may come from a task that pupils do on their own without interacting with other children.

We suspect that you will have observed children and made judgements about them in many of those settings, and you may have noted down some of your observations and/or shared them with the class teacher or tutor when you were on teaching practice.

PURPOSES OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

As a new teacher you will be meeting children whom you have not taught, or may not have even met previously. In these situations you might wish to gain an overview of each pupil's progress. This is particularly so when children are transferring between different stages of schooling and the classwork is different. Summative assessment is used frequently in these contexts because obtaining a summary of what learners know or can do helps the teacher to decide what to teach next.

Summative assessment is carried out for several purposes. First, it provides you with a summary of learners' achievements that will inform your future teaching and of course your planning for future learning. (This is close to the notion of formative assessment described in Unit 5.1.) Second, it provides valid and accurate information that can be shared with parents about their children's progress. And, third, summatively assessing learning can

provide a numerical measurement that can be used in league tables – the purpose being to make schools accountable by allowing comparisons of achievement across schools.

Before reading on, try to put these purposes in order of importance for yourself as a classroom teacher.

We suspect this exercise is not that simple to do. Assessing learners for the purpose of helping you to plan your teaching can't easily be accommodated alongside assessing learners for the purpose of rendering the school or class accountable through the publication of league tables. League tables call for assessment methods that are reliable, in that they are comparable across all schools and across the country as a whole, and valid, in that they offer an account of what is considered important to know at various stages of schooling. As Black *et al.* (2003: 2) note, these are 'exacting requirements'. Reliability and comparability are not major issues if, on the other hand, you are seeking evidence to help you decide what to teach next.

For the purpose of generating league tables, as Black *et al*. (2003) note, the main assessment methods are formal tests (not devised by teachers). These are usually isolated from day-to-day teaching and learning, and they are often carried out at special times of the year. In contrast, assessments designed to inform your teaching are usually more informal, they may be integrated into your ongoing teaching, and they are likely to be carried out in different ways by different teachers. In the light of the previous sentence, you may well wonder what the difference is between summative and formative assessment, and indeed some research challenges the distinction in the first place (Threlfall, 2005). However, in line with the work of Black and Wiliam (1998) we are reluctant to label the latter as formative assessment.

As we see it, the salient feature of formative assessment is that learners themselves use the information deriving from the assessment to bridge the gap between what they know and what they need to know (see Hall and Burke (2003) for a full discussion). Collecting information to inform your teaching is in itself no guarantee that learners will use this information to move forward in their learning.

PRODUCING GOOD EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT

It is important to appreciate that summative assessment can take a variety of forms – it need not, indeed should not, just be a written test. In addition, it is important for you as a teacher to try to anticipate how pupils might respond to the demands of an assessment task. In 1987, Desmond Nuttall wrote a paper describing the types of tasks or activities that are good for assessing learning. Such tasks, he says, should be concrete and within the experience of the individual; they should be presented clearly; and they should be perceived by the pupils as relevant to their current concerns.

Being able to respond to a task by using different methods, for example making, doing, talking and writing, allows learners to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. The value of varied approaches to assessing learning is that they help learners really show what they know or can do. For example, a learner who is not a very skilled writer may be better able to demonstrate their historical knowledge through talk or through a combination of written work and oral work. Think about your own history as a pupil – do you feel that a written test enabled you to demonstrate what you really knew? Would other ways have been more appropriate for assessing your competence in different curriculum areas?

The use of a variety of ways of assessing learning (often referred to as 'multiple response modes') allows adults to have evidence of learning from a variety of contexts, and to avoid making judgements about learning based on single sources of evidence, such as, say, a pencil and paper

test. This results in information that is more accurate and trustworthy than results deriving from just one assessment in just one situation. You could say that it is more valid and dependable. By looking across several instances in which a child uses, say, reading, the teacher and teaching assistant gain valuable information about that child as a reader.

Judgements based on the use of a variety of sources of assessment information are of course more demanding on time and resources. This means teachers and policy makers have to consider the appropriate balance to obtain between validity and trustworthiness of assessment evidence on the one hand and manageability and cost on the other.

Tick sheets and portfolios

Some teachers use 'tick sheets' to summarise a child's achievements at a point in schooling. This type of assessment is also summative. What is your view of this approach in the light of the previous section about good assessment evidence?

The tick sheet, yes/no approach might be manageable for very busy practitioners and could provide a useful overview of a child's learning. However, it is likely to be too crude to offer a really meaningful account of learning and usually it offers no source of evidence or little evidence regarding the context in which the assessment took place. Mary Jane Drummond, an expert on early years education, says that a tick sheet approach may hinder the production of a 'rich respectful account' (1999: 34) of a child's learning.

Portfolios offer a useful way of keeping evidence of learning. For example, your pupils might have an individual literacy portfolio into which they put lists of books read, written responses to stories, non-fiction writing, drawings or paintings in response to literature, and so on. They may include drafts of work as well as finished pieces of writing. You might then use this evidence to write short summary accounts of your pupils, which in turn could be used as a basis of discussion at a parents' evening.

As well as individual portfolios, some schools keep 'class' or 'school' portfolios where they put samples of pupil work. They may annotate the samples with reference to context and the standards met. So, for example, contextual annotations might include the date, whether the piece of work was the result of pupils collaborating or an individual working alone, whether the teacher helped or whether it was done independently. Annotations about the standard met might include a grade or a score and a comment indicating how closely the work met a National Curriculum standard. This kind of portfolio sometimes acts as a vehicle for teachers to share their interpretation of standards and perhaps agreed targets, not just among themselves but also with parents and with pupils.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND TEACHER ASSESSMENT

As well as the external testing regime of standard assessment tests (SATs), teachers assess and report on their pupils via teacher assessment – they are required to 'sum up' their pupils' attainments in relation to National Curriculum. As we noted earlier, in order to offer defensible and trustworthy accounts of their attainment, you need to assess pupils in a variety of contexts and in a variety of ways. But any assessment is only as good as the use to which it is put. An important question is: what happens to the assessment information once it is collected? This aspect of assessment is known as 'consequential validity' as it refers to the consequences of the assessment. Is the assessment information used to inform teaching, to enable the production of league tables or to summarise achievement for parents, or to pass on the next teacher to support planning?

Changes across the UK over the past several years have given teachers more responsibility for summative assessment (Black et al, 2011). Assessment information, including that obtained via SATs and, especially, teacher assessment, can be used in a way that supports teaching and learning. We will explain this with reference to the way some teachers use assessments in their schools. A study conducted in six different schools in six different local education authorities (LEAs) in the north of England sought to understand primary teachers' summative assessment practices (Hall and Harding, 2002). On the basis of many interviews over two years with teachers and LEA assessment advisers and observations of assessment meetings, two contrasting

approaches schools were identified. The approaches are described as *collaborative* and *individualistic.* To illustrate we will describe two scenarios at either end of a continuum – highly collaborative and highly individualistic. One we call East Street and the other West Street which show these contrasting tendencies. The purpose of presenting this here is not to make any statement about representative practice in schools today but to offer you contrasting scenarios to enable you think more constructively and critically about practices you might encounter. As you read the descriptions consider your own experience of being in schools on teaching practice.

A collaborative approach

East Street School is a large inner city primary school of 400+ pupils, all but 5 per cent of whom are from ethnic minority backgrounds. East Street has an assessment community that is highly collaborative, with teachers, parents and pupils having many opportunities to talk about assessment and how and why it is done. The staff frequently meet to discuss the purposes of assessment in general and their ongoing teacher assessment in particular. They talk about what constitutes evidence of achievement in various areas of the curriculum and they compare their judgements of shared samples of pupil work. They use a range of tools, such as school portfolios and sample material from official websites, to help in their assessment tasks and to ensure that they are applying assessment criteria consistently. They strive to include pupils, parents and other teachers as part of that assessment community.

An individualistic approach

West Street School is a larger-than-average primary school serving a varied socio-economic area in a northern city. West Street reluctantly complies with the demands of national policy on assessment. Teachers here work largely in isolation from each other in interpreting and implementing assessment goals and, especially, in interpreting standards and criteria for assessment. Very little or no use is made of portfolios and there is limited opportunity for staff to meet as a team to share their assessment practices and perspectives. There is no real attempt to involve interested groups, such as parents and pupils, in assessment discussions. The staff tend to view national testing as an unhelpful, arduous intrusion.

It is likely that some sixteen years after that study was conducted schools are now much more collaborative in their approaches in general and especially in relation to assessment.

Task 5.2.1 **ASSESSMENT – DIFFERENT APPROACHES**

- Study Table 5.2.1, which summarises the assessment approach in East Street and West Street schools.
- Suggest some reasons for the difference in approach in the two schools.
- Practice in most schools is probably somewhere in between these two. Make a note of which practices listed for East Street you are aware of from your experience in school recently.

- **Table 5.2.1** Assessment communities and assessment individuals

	Collaborative (East Street School)	Individualistic (West Street School)
Goals	Compliant and accepting	Reluctant compliance and resistance
Processes	Assessment seen as a requiring interpretation; Interpretation is shared; Portfolios in active use; Exemplification materials used by teachers; A mixture of school-devised and official website materials in use to support summative judgements; Evidence – planned collection of evidence; Variety of modes; Assessment embedded in teaching and learning; Emphasis on the process and not just the product; Common language of assessment Commitment to moderation (cross-checking of interpretations of evidence) to ensure consistency and fairness.	Limited emphasis on collaboration and sharing of assessment information; Portfolios – dormant; Exemplification materials not used; Commercially produced materials used by some individuals; No school-level policy on assessment; Evidence – not used much; Assessment often bolted on to learning and teaching; Emphasis on products rather than processes; Uncertainty/confusion about terms; Weak or non-existent moderation or cross checking of assessment judgements.
Personnel	Whole school; aspirations to enlarge the assessment community to include pupils, parents and other teachers	Teachers as individuals; no real grasp of the potential for enlarging the assessment community
Value system	Assessment seen as useful, necessary and integral to teaching and learning; made meaningful through collaboration	Assessment seen as 'imposed' and not meaningful at the level of the class teacher or the school.

To become a collaborative assessment community, staff need time to develop their expertise. Teachers need time to talk about and share their practices in a culture that shares the expectation that adults too are valued learners.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING: CURRENT POLICY

Summative assessment does not just refer to the kinds of end of key stage assessments carried out in schools in England and known as SATs (there are no SATs in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, see below). While these external tasks and tests are indeed summative, they are not the only kind of summative assessment that goes on in schools. However, because of their 'high stakes' – that is, schools' ranking in league tables depends on them – they are accorded very high status in practice in schools and people sometimes make the mistake of assuming that summative assessment means SATs.

This section offers a description of current assessment policy in the primary school.

Assessment and Reporting of Attainment

A new national curriculum (~~N~~NC) was introduced into primary schools in September 2014, setting out the programmes of study for the various subjects. The ~~N~~NC sets out the expectations for the end of each Key Stage (KS) and schools are free to develop a curriculum relevant to their pupils that teaches that content. Schools are expected to have an assessment system that checks on what children have learned and the extent to which they are on track to meet the externally set expectations associated with the end of the relevant KS.

Attainment targets in the form of performance descriptors were introduced in the summer of 2016. These are described as frameworks to support teacher assessment and alongside the external tests are intended to provide evidence of learners' achievement. The descriptors are for indicating how a child is performing at the end of a KS and are in the form of 3 categories: 'working towards the national standard', 'working at the national standard' and 'working at greater depth within the national standard' from which one is selected to describe the child's performance. In the case, say, of writing at KS1 'working at the national standard' incorporate<u>s</u> 12 criteria which have to be demonstrated through a writing narrative that involves attention to a range of skills and knowledge in spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting.

Tests based on the ~~N~~NC for English, maths and science were implemented in the summer of 2016. The KS2 test results are reported as scaled scores where the expected score is 100. The policy is that pupil progress will be measured in relation to the average progress made by children with the same baseline i.e. the same KS1 average point score. For 2016 the attainment component of the 'floor' target is set at 65% of pupils in a school reaching that level. This is how 'floor standards' is defined: '...schools will be above the floor if pupils make sufficient progress across all of reading, writing and mathmatics or more than 65% of them achieve the national standard in reading, writing and mathematics. According to the Government's Association for Achievement and Improvement through Assessment (AAIA) website <u>.</u>schools will be above the floor if they meet either the progress or the attainment threshold' (http://www.aaia.org.uk). The attainment aspect is to be based on the proportion of pupils reaching the new expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths. They will need a scaled score of 100+ in reading and maths to have met the expected standard in writing. A school will be considered below the floor standard if two conditions apply: less than 65% of pupils meet the expected attainment standard in reading, writing and maths combin~~t~~ed (reading and maths assessed by external tests; writing via Teacher Assessment <u>or</u>~~,~~ TA) and pupils have not made 'sufficient progress' in any one of reading, writing and maths.

There is no floor standard for the earliest years of formal primary schooling.

Performance tables remain central to accountability in England. The performance measures that are relevant for each primary school are all of the following:

- Average progress in reading, writing and maths
- Percentage reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2
- Average score of pupils in the end of KS2 assessments
- Percentage of pupils who achieve a high score (yet to be defined) in all areas a the end of KS2.

The above measures are described by the AAIA as 'headline' measures and all schools are required to publish them in a consistent, standard format on their websites from 2016. Thus, each school must post on its website a profile of itself telling parents about pupil performance, progress and other priorities (DCSF, 2009).

Schools are required to report to parents of pupils in years 2 (at end of KS1 usually age 7) and 6 (end of KS2 usually age 11) the results of their Teacher Assessments (using the framework described above). In addition, schools are required to report the results of the KS2 externally set and marked tests. KS1 test results are not necessarily reported to the Local Education Authority (LEA) or to the DfE or parents. School test results are published on their websites and in the form of league tables in the media and are commented upon extensively by journalists.

Parts of the UK Compared

There are no standard assessment tests (SATs) in Scotland but new assessments in literacy and numeracy are being planned and are due to commence in 2017. Scottish schools have access to a bank of materials to support assessment – the National Assessment Resource (NAR) which is an interactive computerized assessment system (InCAS). These resources align with the curriculum (see Education Scotland, 2016, *Assessment for Curriculum for Excellence)* and attempt to help teachers integrate their teaching and assessment. They also include moderation guides with examplars of children's assesed work designed to help teachers interpret and cross check their own assesssment of their pupils' work. Teachers and schools decide when to administer tests to their pupils. At the end of their primary schooling, a pupil profile is prepared for each pupil summarising their achievements in the various curriculum areas with a summative category indicating whether the achievement is 'developing', 'consolidated' or 'secure' . National standards in literacy and numeracy are monitored through representative sampling procedures. Thus, unlike England, individual schools are not held to account through comparative achievement data and there are no league tables of performance.

In essence the tests available to Scottish schools are not substantially different to those used in England but crucially they are not 'high stakes' because there is not an emphasis on ranking and comparing. Performance tables are not compiled and published.

Up until 1999 the English and Welsh school systems were aligned. Since then Wales has opted for quite a different approach especially in matters of assessment for accountability purposes. Wales ceased to externally assess seven year olds through SATs in 2006 and abandoned external testing for 11 year olds in 2014 but Teacher Assessment is mandatory at the end of KS2 (age 11). There are changes occuring in relation to the introduction of reading and numeracy assessments from age 7 as part of the new national literacy and numeracy strategy. The situation in Wales is changing in the light of the review of its curriculum and assessment framework under Graham Donaldson (Learning Wales website; Donaldson, 2015). The recommendation from that review is that Key Stages should be removed in favour of a more coherent and holistic approach to assessment where 'progression steps' or points of learning on a continuum should be viewed as a staging post for a child's development, not a judgement. The Welsh government does not publish primary performance data through which league tables can be compiled.

In Northern Ireland literacy and numeracy tests are implemented in Years 4-7 via InCAS (see above in respect of Scotland). Teacher assessment is based on levels of achievement allocated for cross curricular skills of communication, using and applying maths and using IT.

Unlike the situation in England, there is not a high stakes culture in Wales, Scotland and NI, compared to that in England (see Hall, Ozerk and Curtin, in press for full discussion).

THE IMPACT OF 'HIGH STAKES' ASSESSMENT ON PUPILS

Many researchers on assessment, including ourselves, have written about the impact on pupils of different assessment purposes and practices (Harlen and Deakin Crick, 2002). The research shows that schools feel under pressure to get more of their pupils achieving at higher levels in national tests. This pushes some teachers, especially those who have classes about to take national tests, to spend more time and energy on helping pupils to get good at doing those tests. This is often referred to as 'teaching to the test' and it means there is less time to actually develop pupils' skills and understanding in the various areas of a broad and balanced curriculum.

This is exactly what we found in a study of Year 6 pupils in urban areas of disadvantage (Hall *et al.*, 2004). The external pencil and paper tests, which are designed to offer evidence to the government about how schools are raising standards, received enormous attention in the daily life of pupils in the schools that were part of our study. Such is the perceived pressure in schools to do well in league tables that they sometimes feel unable to place sufficient emphasis on assessment designed to promote learning across the curriculum or on assessing learning through a variety of modes. Summative assessment can even be seen as the goal of teaching: George W. Bush, a former President of the USA, visited an East London primary school. After listening to a story being read to the children, he commented on the importance of literacy to the teachers: 'You teach a child to read, and he or her (*sic*) will be able to pass a literacy test' (cited in Yandell, 2008).

In situations where passing a test is seen as the purpose of teaching, the children's learning

experiences become focused towards this end. Yandell (2008) described how pupils, studying a play, were only given photocopies of the 'SATs' sections of the text and never read the play itself. Reviewing a range of evidence concerning the impact of high stakes summative testing led Wyse and Torrance (2009, 224) to conclude that it can drive teaching in 'exactly the opposite direction to that which other research indicates will improve teaching, learning and attainment'.

There are many other potential consequences for pupils. 'High stakes' tests can lead teachers to adopt transmission styles of teaching and thus disadvantage pupils who prefer other, more creative, ways of learning. Practice tests, when repeatedly undertaken, can have a negative impact on the self-esteem of lower-achieving pupils. Research from outside the UK suggests that pupils' expectations about the purpose of assessment reflects badly on summative approaches (Black, 2003), for example pupils believing that summative assessment was entirely for their school's and parents' benefit. Children who did less well in such assessments felt that their purpose was to make them work harder. It was a source of pressure that resulted in pupil anxiety and even fear.

Pupils used to a diet of summative assessments, based on written tests and on only a few curriculum areas (often numeracy and literacy) can take time in adapting to more formative approaches. The same can be true for teachers. For example, in response to calls for formative assessment, many teachers produce formal summative tests that mimic the statutory tests. This again reflects the perceived importance of SATs. Weeden *et al.* (2002) make the point that the more important a quantitative measure becomes, 'the more it is likely to distort the processes it is supposed to monitor' (p. 34).

'High stakes' testing might also influence the way you respond to and feel about the children in your class. 'How many teachers of young children are now able to listen attentively in a non-instrumental way without feeling guilty about the absence of criteria or the insistence of a target tugging at their sleeve' (Fielding, cited in Hill, 2007). There is clearly an emotional/affective factor that is often overlooked in seeking the objective viewpoint that summative assessments are seen as presenting. Robert Reinecke highlights this:

> Assessments, formal or informal, considered or casual, intentional or not, powerfully affect people, particularly students. The assessment climate that students experience is a crucial component of instruction and learning. Students' assessment experiences remain with them for a lifetime and substantially affect their capacity for future learning . . . emotional charge is part of the character of assessment information.
>
> (1998: 7)

For any assessment to have a positive impact on children's learning, the way in which performance results are used and communicated is vitally important.

The phonics screening test for use in the early years classroom is intended to be a 'light-touch' assessment to confirm whether individual pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard.'(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/2016-key-stage-1-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-ara/section-7-phonics-screening-check; see also DfE,2012b). The check consists of 20 real words and 20 pseudo-words that a pupil reads aloud to the teacher. However 'light touch' it was intended to be, one can see how such a statutory test, whose results provide information at school, local authority and national level could have a profound effect on classroom practice and pedagogy. Dombey (2011) argues that the assessment distorts the process of learning to read and the United Kingdom Literacy Association (2012) questioned its usefulness as a summative assessment for all readers.

n Note down some advantages and disadvantages of testing all children at various times in their primary schooling. n Why do you think England, in particular, places such a strong emphasis on external testing for accountability purposes?

We would suggest that external testing in primary schools is part of a wider social preoccupation with measuring, league tables and auditing. If you consider other social services, for example the health service and the police service, you find a similar push towards accountability

in the form of league tables. England has experienced all of this to a greater degree than other parts of the UK. Education in England seems to be more politicised than in other parts of the UK and politicians in England are less inclined to be influenced by professional groups such as teachers and researchers. This means that, in turn, such groups have less power in educational decision making in England than their counterparts have in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

A CRITIQUE OF ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

Dylan Wiliam, a researcher on assessment over many years, has expressed concern about the narrowing effect on the curriculum of teachers teaching to the test – a point we noted earlier in this chapter. Here are some key questions he poses which we believe will be helpful to you in critically reflecting on your own and others' practices and in examining national and school policies.

- Why are pupils tested as individuals, when the world of work requires people who can work well in a team?
- Why do we test memory, when in the real world engineers and scientists never rely on memory: if they're stuck, they look things up.
- Why do we use timed tests when it is usually far more important to get things done right than to get things done quickly?

He favours an approach that would support teachers' own judgements of pupil achievement, and believes that this approach should replace all forms of testing, from the earliest stages through to GCSE and A-levels. He points out that this happens in Sweden. This is how he justifies his argument:

'In place of the current vicious spiral, in which only those aspects of learning that are easily measured are regarded as important, I propose developing a system of summative assessment based on moderated teacher assessment. A separate system, relying on 'light sampling' of the performance of schools, would provide stable and robust information for the purposes of accountability and policy-formation'. (Wiliam, 2002: 61–2)

He goes on to say that his preferred approach 'would also be likely to tackle boys' underachievement, because the current "all or nothing" test at the end of a key stage encourages boys to believe that they can make up lost ground at the last minute' (pp. 61–2).

He envisages that there would be a large number of assessment tasks but not all pupils would undertake the same task. These good-quality assessment tasks would cover the entire curriculum and they would be allocated randomly, he suggests. This would guard against teaching to the test or, as he puts it, 'the only way to teach to the test would be to teach the whole curriculum to every student' (p. 62). He suggests that schools that taught only a limited curriculum, or concentrated on, say, the most able pupils, would be shown up as ineffective in this scenario.

Task 5.2.3 **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

- What do you think of Wiliam's ideas?
- Do you think his suggestions are more in line with what we know about learning and assessment, especially what we know about the impact of testing on pupils?

- Do you think his suggestions are feasible?
- How would these groups view his ideas: parents, pupils, teachers, politicians?

SUMMARY

In this unit we have sought to define and describe summative assessment and ways of using it. We have also highlighted the (mostly negative) impact on learners of testing, especially 'high stakes' testing. Whatever the national policy on external testing, as a class teacher you will have a powerful influence over how you assess your pupils. In turn, how you assess your pupils will have considerable influence on how they perform, on how motivated they become as learners and on how they feel about themselves as learners. You are likely to influence the kind of lifelong learners they become.

To recap the major points of the unit, we suggest that you revisit the learning objectives we noted on the first page. As you do this, you might consider the different ways in which you could demonstrate your understanding and knowledge of the topic.

ANNOTATED FURTHER READING

~~The following three articles provide evidence about the impact of 'high stakes' summative assessment on pupils and teachers, and on teaching and learning.~~

~~Hall, K., Collins, J., Benjamin, S., Sheehy, K. and Nind, M. (2004) 'SATurated models of pupildom: assessment and inclusion/exclusion', *British Educational Research Journal*, 30(6): 801–17.~~

~~Harlen, W. (2005) 'Teachers' summative practices and assessment for learning: tensions and synergies', *The Curriculum Journal*, 16(2): 207–24.~~

~~Reay, D. and Wiliam, D. (1999) '"I'll be a nothing": structure, agency and the construction of identity through assessment', *British Educational Research Journal*, 25(3): 343–54.~~

Boon, S.I. (2015) The role of training in improving peer assessment skills amongst year six pupils in primary school writing: an action research enquiry *Education 3-13, 43, 6.*

Fleer, M. (2015) Developing an *assessment pedagogy*: the tensions and struggles in re-theorising assessment from a cultural–historical perspective *Assessment in Education* 22, 2.

The first article listed here describes an action research study where year six students were trained in peer assessment skills and shows how learners' facility in assessment language can enhance their learning. The second article is about assessment in a broader sense and is highly relevant to formative and summative assessment alike. It invites us to ponder what assessment pedagogy is and how our assumptions about assessment and pedagogy shape our practice.

'M Level' research articles

Paul Black, Christine Harrison, Jeremy Hodgen, Bethan Marshall & Natasha Serret (2011): Can teachers' summative assessments produce dependable results and also enhance classroom learning?, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 18:4.

This research is based on a longitudinal study of teachers' opinions and practices and addresses the issue of how summative assessments might be used to positive effect within the classroom. Five key features of

summative assessment practice are presented.

Elwood, J. and Murphy, P. (2015) Assessment systems as cultural scripts: a sociocultural theoretical lens on assessment practice and products *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice* 22 , 2, 2015

This Editorial to a special issue on sociocultural perspectives on assessment, along with its accompanying articles, offer a challenging and theorised account of assessment research, policy and practice which is worth studying to sharpen your thinking and invite you to challenge some current practices.

Hondrick, A.L, Hertel, S, Adl-Amini, K and Klieme, E. (2016) Implementing curriculum-embedded formative assessment in primary school science classrooms *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice, 23, 3.*

Nortvedt, G., Santos, L, and Pinto, J. (2016) Assessment for learning in Norway and Portugal: the case of primary school mathematics teaching *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice* 23 , 3.

Both these articles show how local assessment practices, whether formative or summative-oriented, are highly influenced by national policies, such as curriculum reforms, national professional development projects and teacher autonomy. Both these papers offer an interesting comparative lens through which one can evaluate one's own national context.

~~'M Level' research articles~~

~~Paul Black, Christine Harrison, Jeremy Hodgen, Bethan Marshall & Natasha Serret (2011): Can teachers' summative assessments produce dependable results and also enhance classroom learning?, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 18:4, 451-469~~

~~This research is based on a longitudinal study of teachers' opinions and practices and addresses the issue of how summative assessments might be used to positive effect within the classroom. Five key features of summative assessment practice are presented.~~

~~Dominic Wyse & Harry Torrance (2009): The development and consequences of national curriculum assessment for primary education in England, Educational Research, 51:2, 213-228~~

~~This paper reviews evidence about the development of national curriculum assessment in England and its impact. The article gives an excellent insight into the impact of high stakes testing on education on teachers and pupils.~~

~~Elwood, J. and Murphy, P. (2015) Assessment systems as cultural scripts: a sociocultural theoretical lens on assessment practice and products *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice* 22 , 2, 2015~~

~~This Editorial to a special issue on sociocultural perspectives on assessment, along with its accompanying articles, offer a challenging and~~

~~theorised account of assessment research, policy and practice which is worth studying to sharpen your thinking and invite you to challenge some current practices.~~

RELEVANT WEBSITES

Association for Achievement and Improvement through Assessment (AAIA) website: http://www.aaia.org.uk

Assessment is for Learning (AifL): www.aifl-na.net

Information about National Assessments and examples of tasks, which are open to anyone to browse, can be found at this site.

Department for Education http://www.education.gov.uk/

A useful source for details of assessment initiatives mentioned in the chapter and the results of statutory tests.

Information on phonics assessment https://www.gov.uk/guidance/2016-key-stage-1-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-ara/section-7-phonics-screening-check

Northern Ireland Curriculum: www.nicurriculum.org.uk/

Has information on Northern Ireland's curriculum and assessment arrangements.

Primary Assessment – Making Summative Assessment Work for You: www.teachers.tv/video/3360

Professor Wynne Harlen, whose work is referred to in this unit, takes part in a discussion of teacher's summative assessments.

Primary Assessment – The Welsh Experience: www.teachers.tv/video/3361

This looks at how teachers in Wales are assessing and moderating their work across phases, following the removal of statutory testing as Key Stages 2 and 3.

Scottish Government site on Curriculum and Assessment: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/ Schools/curriculum

This is a useful source of further information regarding Assessment is for Learning (AifL).

Visit the companion website www.routledge.com/textbooks/ltps2e for:

n additional questions and task for this unit; n links to useful websites relevant to this unit.

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