

9

ASSESSMENT *FOR* AND OF LEARNING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Angela Newton and
Mark Bowler

INTRODUCTION

Assessment is integral to learning and teaching (Black and Wiliam, 2018; Hay and Penney, 2013) and thus is an essential part of your role as a physical education teacher. You need to recognise where pupils are in their learning, communicate strengths and areas for development and identify steps required to improve further. This might involve assessing pupil performance in physical education or broader aspects of learning such as their ability to make informed decisions and assess themselves and others. Examples of assessment can range from informal comments such as ‘good shot’ to the more formal assessment associated with examinations.

There are two principal types of assessment. One is known as formative. This type of assessment is designed to help pupils to progress their learning. The other is known as summative and provides information at the end of a lesson or unit of work concerning what pupils have achieved. In one sense, formative assessment looks forward while summative assessment looks back. Another way to differentiate between these two types of assessment is to refer to the first as assessment *for* learning and the second as assessment *of* learning (Assessment Reform Group (ARG), 1999). Both of these types of assessment are covered in this chapter.

The quality of assessment practice in physical education historically has been questioned (Frapwell, 2015; Leirhaug and MacPhail, 2015; Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted), 2008; 2013; 2019b; Tolgfors, 2018). There is also a current consensus that more attention should be paid to assessment *for* learning. For example, telling a pupil that they have attained a ‘good hang position in the air’ provides little information to enhance learning. More information and guidance to improve are given if the feedback goes further than this and says ‘a good hang position but you could now try and drive your knee up higher in take-off to gain more height’. Similarly, an examination awarded just a mark gives little guidance as to how pupils can improve their work. Written comments giving feedback on strengths and areas to work on are far more productive and are again an example of assessment *for* learning.

This chapter identifies the reasons why we assess and how we do it. It aims to improve your ability to use the principles of assessment *for* learning as well as assessment *of*

learning to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential. There are opportunities throughout the chapter to reflect upon and critically analyse assessment in practice.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- identify the broad principles and purposes of assessment in physical education;
- understand the role of assessment *for* learning and assessment *of* learning in physical education;
- apply shared intended learning outcomes (ILOs), questioning, observation and feedback and pupil peer and self-assessment in your lessons to improve teaching and learning;
- critically evaluate the success of assessment in helping pupils to achieve their full potential.

PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning, whether your focus is formative, as in assessment *for* learning, or summative, as in assessment *of* learning. As with every other part of your work, it needs to be done well in order to be effective. Pupils and parents, in particular, are concerned that assessment is carried out rigorously and fairly. This is true both of the very informal assessments you make in a lesson and of the most formal, as in giving a course work grade. Parents may complain if they feel their child's work is being unfairly judged by a teacher; for example, that the child always receives criticism, but never praise. Appeals may also be made to awarding bodies against grades awarded by accredited examination courses.

Good assessment adheres to certain principles (ARG, 2002), but the following section will specifically consider how:

- It should have a clear purpose and should be fit for that purpose.
- It is clear what the attainment – practical or written – is being measured against.
- It should be valid and reliable.

Purposes of assessment

Assessment fulfils a number of functions. Some researchers categorise these functions under two main headings: formative and summative. The purpose of formative assessment is to provide pupils with guidance as to how they can move on from their current stage of understanding or mastery. Typically, formative assessment is given in the ongoing teaching situation and may not be formally recorded. Formative assessment is also given in the comments written on a piece of home learning or an examination script. On the other hand, the purpose of summative assessment is to record attainment at a

particular time, usually the end of a unit, term or year. This is often a formal process and records are kept of these marks or grades, such as in pupils' school reports.

Some purposes of assessment are given below. As you work through this section, decide whether the purpose of the assessment described is summative or formative. In order to make this decision you must consider whether the assessment promotes learning (assessment *for* learning) or merely assesses the current level of learning (assessment *of* learning).

Guidance or feedback

Pupils require information about their attainment to help them to understand what you are looking for in their work, to challenge them to greater achievement and to motivate them. This is most likely to take the form of verbal comments to pupils, although you may also be required to provide written feedback on occasion, for example, when pupils are 'on report' or when you are marking written work.

Diagnosis and evaluation

When first meeting a group of pupils or when beginning a new unit of work, you may wish to make a preliminary assessment of the pupils' strengths and needs, in which case you are assessing for the purpose of *diagnosis*. This information guides your subsequent planning. On a lesson-by-lesson basis you want to know what or how much pupils have learned in a lesson so that you can judge to what extent the ILOs of the lesson have been achieved and then plan the next lesson on the basis of this evaluation. In this case you are assessing for *evaluation*.

Grading and prediction

You may be required to provide grades for an annual report to parents. The grading system may be designated by the school or the department. With respect to examination classes, you need to grade the work in accordance with the requirements of the awarding body. Many of the sixth-form pupils you teach will be making applications for university. You may need to assess their attainment prior to the completion of application forms to provide a predicted grade and to give information for a reference concerning their potential for their chosen course of study. These assessments are for the purposes of *grading* and *prediction*.

Motivation

The nature of the assessment and the way it is communicated to pupils can have a significant effect on their motivation, particularly when feedback is given publicly. Many higher-attaining pupils thrive on being recognised as running the fastest or jumping the furthest; however, for lower-attaining pupils it is never appropriate to draw attention to their attainment relative to others. Rather, it is better to focus on their improvement compared to their previous performance on the activity. All pupils benefit from positive feedback on effort and application, and on recognition of how much they have improved against previous attainment. Measuring attainment against an individual's previous

work is called ipsative assessment and is covered later in this chapter. An alternative approach to motivate pupils may be, on occasion, to focus on broader goals, such as how well they can reflect on their work, their leadership skills or their ability to work cooperatively as part of a team.

As you get to know pupils, you realise that individual pupils respond differently to different types of feedback. For example, some may relish a challenge, others may need to be reminded that they are not performing up to their potential, while others may be very sensitive to less than positive comments. Lesson-based informal feedback is a means by which pupils are made aware of the continuous process of assessment you carry out in each of your lessons. Your observations of pupil attainment and of their responses to assessment, and the way you respond via feedback, are key aspects of your teaching which you need to monitor and use sensitively to maximise pupil motivation and learning.

Selection of pupils for grouping

There may be a school or department policy to group or set pupils according to their attainment in physical education. You may therefore need to provide your head of department with the relevant assessment information for the groups you teach. These assessments are being carried out for selection purposes.

There are other assessment demands made of physical education teachers. For example, you may be asked by your head of department or another colleague to conduct trials in an extra-curricular activity in order to select pupils for school teams, or to decide which pupils may benefit most from an invitation to take part in an outdoor activity expedition. On occasion, physical education teachers may use certain criteria for selection (criterion-referenced assessment), but the selection process could depend on the teacher making judgements about which pupils perform better than others (norm-referenced assessment). These types of assessment are explained in more detail later in the chapter. Team selection criteria may not take account of the really keen rugby player who turns up every week of the season but does not make the progress or have the necessary physical attributes required for the team. Thus physical education teachers have to be clear about how they justify their criteria for team selection. The keen but non-selected player may lose motivation and self-esteem as a result of the process and you need to consider the effects of such decisions (see Chapter 14 for more information about self-esteem).

Formal reporting

Awarding bodies usually require teachers to assess pupils formally. Examination boards may have elements of teacher-assessed coursework for both practical and theoretical elements. This assessment needs to be planned and carried out systematically and the criteria being used need to be very clearly identified (see assessment *of* learning, later in the chapter). Careful assessments of all pupils must be made and recorded in some way. These assessments, collected at intervals from selected units and lessons over a period of time, or from teacher-graded coursework, provide evidence for you to make judgements about pupils. This can form the basis of termly/annual reports to parents.

Task 9.1 asks you to work with another student teacher to observe and analyse assessment in different settings.

Task 9.1 **Observing assessment in action**

Observe a physical education teacher or fellow student teacher in at least two lessons. Record all instances of assessment in each lesson. Following the observation, answer the following questions:

- What *methods* are used for assessing pupils? This answers the question of how pupils are assessed (e.g. teacher or peer observation, listening to answers to questions, writing down scores/comments, written comments by pupils or assignments).
- What is the teacher assessing? (e.g. attitudes, planning, attainment, performance, knowledge, understanding, evaluation, cooperation).
- Who is doing the assessment? Is it always the teacher? Are pupils involved in the process?
- Why is the assessment being carried out? Is the purpose to motivate? Is it to identify the best performers? Is it to give feedback to the pupils/parents/governors/others? Any other reasons?
- How are pupils given the results of assessment? Is it through an informal process such as a brief comment giving constructive feedback? Is it through a mark given for a specific attainment or evaluation? Any other ways?

Identify which of your examples involve assessment *for* learning and which involve assessment *of* learning. Some could involve both. Put these observations in your teaching file/professional development portfolio (PDP) or equivalent and draw on them when you are planning assessment in your lessons.

Measuring pupils' achievement

The purpose for which you are carrying out the assessment should determine the yardstick against which you measure achievement. All assessment involves comparison and there are three types of comparison usually associated with assessment (two of which have already been mentioned earlier in the chapter):

- 1 comparison with the attainment of others (*norm-referenced* assessment);
- 2 measurement against predetermined criteria (*criterion-referenced* assessment);
- 3 comparison with previous attainment in the same activity or task (*ipsative* assessment).

See Haydn (2016); Booth (2019); and McLaughlin (2019) for further information.

A race is an obvious example of a *norm-referenced* assessment. Each runner's performance is being judged in relation to the performance in the race of the other competitors.

Many school examinations and class tests are also norm-referenced, the aim being to create a rank order of achievement.

Many awarding bodies produce precise descriptors against which pupil attainment is assessed (e.g. General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) practical work). The statements may be associated with a corresponding mark that contributes to a final grade. These statements are the criteria against which pupils' attainment is judged, making the assessment *criterion-referenced*. Awards of many governing bodies (e.g. British Gymnastics, England Athletics and Swim England Award Schemes) are made on the basis of criterion-referenced assessments.

Where an assessment is being made against previous attempts by that individual to jump, run, swim, etc. this is an *ipsative* assessment. Much informal assessment carried out by both pupils and teachers in lessons is of this nature, for example, when a teacher praises work which is of a higher standard than in previous lessons. Such assessments can be made of any aspect of pupil activity or behaviour. When a teacher tells a pupil, 'You have behaved better this lesson than ever before', or a pupil reports that, 'It's the first time I've swum a whole length without stopping', then ipsative assessments have been made.

If you wish to assess for the purpose of *grading* pupils' achievement, for *selecting* pupils or deciding who would benefit most from a particular opportunity, that is, *predicting* their future attainment, you may well want to compare pupil attainments and thus you are using *norm-referenced* assessment. In making a *diagnosis* of pupils' needs and strengths you need criteria for determining their level of competence. In this case a *criterion-referenced* assessment is most useful. Pupils may well be motivated by the teacher's acknowledgement that their attainment is improving and an *ipsative* assessment provides this. Future improvement of their skill or behaviour is assisted if you are able to offer *guidance* about what the pupils need to work on to develop their attainment further. This is an essential element of assessment *for* learning. The mode of assessment must always be appropriate for what is being measured and why it is being measured. This makes it fit for purpose.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

An assessment is of little value if it does not assess what you want it to assess. If you give a group of pupils a written examination which requires them to show their knowledge of the rules and tactics of basketball it only provides you with information about pupil knowledge of rules and tactics. It does not help you to decide if pupils are able to apply decisions in a game, as no indication is given of their ability to play the game. If an assessment does not provide you with the information that you want, then it is not a valid assessment. The assessment may, however, be reliable. This means that the marks awarded to each pupil on an assessment, e.g. a written examination, would be the same as those you gave originally if you marked a set of examination scripts on another occasion, or if another teacher marked the scripts. Good assessments should be both valid and reliable. It is possible for an assessment to be reliable and not valid, as in the case of the basketball examination. Likewise, in a GCSE class studying the skeletal and muscular systems, an essay set on an aspect of work that is not on the syllabus could be reliable but is not valid. However, an assessment is not valid if it is not reliable. For example, a situation in which class members were given the responsibility to grade peers without explicit criteria has the potential to be valid but is unlikely to be reliable on account of

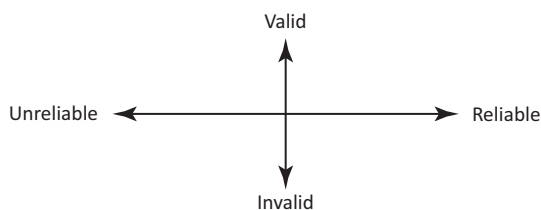
the variation in pupil knowledge and understanding. Assessment reliability and validity can be improved with the use of assessment criteria.

It is the case that assessment in the form of assessment *for* learning is integral to and closely related to the normal lesson activity. In this situation, as a teacher, you are likely to use informal methods of assessment very frequently which rely on observation and verbal interaction and take place in the usual working space. This form of assessment is essential in lessons to gather information on a class's overall response and attainment, and is integral to all teaching (see Chapters 7 and 15 on organisation and observation, respectively). However, these methods can be unreliable in assessing pupil progress as they often rely on fleeting snapshots of pupils performing. Much more systematic assessment is needed if grades are to be awarded. In a practical context, performances would need to be repeated and graded by more than one teacher. Written tests which include multiple-choice items and are carried out in formal examination conditions with the whole cohort of pupils sitting in the same room and being given identical instructions are far more likely to elicit reliable results. However, this type of assessment has limited use. These two examples reveal that the type of assessment must match what is being assessed.

The perfect assessment is yet to be developed. Validity may be increased by using a number of different assessment methods, for example, direct observation, study of video recordings and written work. You should try to make your assessments as valid and reliable as possible within the overall aim of ensuring that any assessment you use is fit for the purpose you have in mind. This will involve authentic learning contexts rather than atomising elements of skill, tactics/composition and decision making. For example, in games, a teacher could assess pupils' performance in the game itself rather than through practices that isolate individual skills, depending on their focus. Task 9.2 asks you to reflect back on your own experience in physical education and consider the reliability and validity of assessment practices to which you were subject.

Task 9.2 **Reflecting on your own assessment experiences**

Consider your own experience as a pupil of being assessed in physical education. What assessments took place in your physical education lessons? Were you aware of being assessed? Were assessments closely related to normal lesson activity? Do you know on what basis the grade or comment on a report was made? Consider whether the informal/formal methods of assessment that you experienced in physical education were valid and reliable. Record your examples of assessment on the diagram below.



Put these notes into your teaching file/PDP or equivalent and consider them when you are planning assessments in your lessons.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

The constituents of assessment *for* learning

Assessment *for* learning has been referred to earlier in this chapter. It is useful now to look into this aspect of assessment in more detail. Research led by ARG (2002) into practice (e.g. ARG, 1999; Black and Wiliam, 1998) resulted in the production of ten research-based principles of assessment *for* learning to guide practice.

These identify that assessment should:

- 1 be considered as part of your planning;
- 2 focus on pupil learning;
- 3 be a central part of your practice as a teacher;
- 4 be regarded as a key professional skill for teachers;
- 5 be sensitive and constructive to take account of the emotional impact on pupils;
- 6 foster motivation in pupils;
- 7 promote understanding of the criteria for assessment and pupil commitment to the goals they need to attain;
- 8 provide pupils with guidance about how to improve;
- 9 enable pupils to reflect and self-assess so that they can become independent learners;
- 10 recognise a full range of educational achievement for all pupils.

(adapted from ARG, 2002)

The work of Black and Wiliam (1998) and the ARG (1999) has had a far-reaching impact throughout education in England. It has significantly influenced assessment practice and policy in schools for over two decades. Whilst the work of the ARG has now finished, the Association for Achievement and Improvement through Assessment website (<http://www.aaia.org.uk/>) provides a good source of information on best practice in relation to assessment, recording and reporting.

The role of assessment *for* learning

As stated above, assessment *for* learning is a type of assessment designed to promote pupil learning, understanding and attainment. It refers to feedback that builds from pupils' current level of mastery and identifies how further progress can be made. It is essentially constructive and forward looking. Understandably, it is a vital element of your work as a teacher.

Effective use of assessment *for* learning requires good observation skills which give rise to accurate assessment and the provision of effective feedback to pupils. Most of your observations focus on pupils' actions in performance, or contributions whilst adopting different roles such as official, coach or choreographer. They may also focus on pupils' work towards achieving the broader goals of education towards which physical education contributes. Many of these actions are fleeting and you have to rely on your ability to observe and judge instantaneously. This is a skill that you need to develop throughout your initial teacher education (ITE) and beyond and is linked to your knowledge and understanding of the contexts in which pupils are working. You need to know what you expect to see in pupil attainment and develop the ability to compare this to

what you observe. Positioning and the ability to scan your class are other related teaching skills. (See Chapter 15 for further guidance on observation. Bowler, Bassett and Newton (2021) also consider the specific use of observation for assessment.) Once you have established sound observation skills, assessment *for* learning helps to determine the progress being made by pupils, indicates their strengths and weaknesses and identifies their future needs.

A range of assessment strategies to support pupil learning and engagement have been presented as guides for practitioners (e.g. Black et al., 2003; Wiliam, 2011; Wiliam and Thompson, 2008). These strategies provide a useful framework for your work in assessing for learning. In relation to practical physical education, Spackman (2002) identified four characteristics of assessment *for* learning that are applicable in our subject. These are shared ILOs, questioning, feedback, peer and self-assessment. These characteristics resonate with many of the principles identified immediately above. These are therefore useful texts to study. Now complete Task 9.3 before reading about each of Spackman's characteristics.

Task 9.3 **Investigating the nature of the assessment you are using in your teaching**

Ask a teacher to complete a focused lesson observation that notes down instances when you used each of the four assessment strategies identified by Spackman (2002). After the lesson discuss the results with the teacher and set yourself a target to work towards using all four strategies as appropriate.

Repeat this exercise again to note your progress in the use of these strategies. Record your progress in your teaching file/PDP or equivalent.

APPLYING SHARED INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES, QUESTIONING, FEEDBACK AND PUPIL PEER- AND SELF-ASSESSMENT IN YOUR LESSONS TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Shared ILOs

ILOs should be shared with pupils so that they are clear about what is to be learned and why they need to learn it. Statements should model the expectations that guide pupils towards the expected learning. Ofsted (2019b) believe that 'pupils will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning'. When sharing ILOs in a gymnastics lesson, for example, you might say:

By the end of today's lesson you will be able to adapt your movement sequence from floor to apparatus and refine your shapes and changes in speed and direction to perform more fluent sequences. This will help you to produce precise and controlled sequences with some originality.

It is important when sharing ILOs that the learning is clearly identified in terms of what pupils will know, understand or be able to do, rather than simply the tasks that the pupils will be carrying out. These ILOs should be revisited throughout the lesson and assessed at appropriate times. When reviewing ILOs, you should ensure that pupils understand how well they achieved the ILOs and the potential they have for further improvement. Guidance for writing ILOs is given in Chapter 6 and also in Bowler, Bassett and Newton (2021), which also has some useful activities to help you to plan and assess learning outcomes.

Questioning

Effective questioning techniques are essential in order to assess pupil knowledge and understanding accurately. Whilst pupil attainment can demonstrate knowledge and understanding, questioning allows a more comprehensive and rigorous assessment, being able to reveal pupils' intellectual grasp of an issue or problem. In the gymnastics example given above, teacher questioning would focus on appreciation of what is being learned, that is, the effects that changes in direction and speed have on a pupil's composition. For example, questions that might be posed are 'When is it appropriate to increase speed?' or 'At which point in the sequence can changes in direction be made?' Questions should be carefully planned, and pupils should be given time to answer; you may even devise a situation in which there is a discussion of the answer with a peer. Teacher questioning, probing and prompting and peer discussion of questions allow pupils to think about their responses more deeply. (See Chapter 16 on the teacher's use of language and Bowler, Bassett and Newton (2021) for more discussion of questioning techniques.) To ensure that all pupils remain engaged during questioning episodes, a no-hands-up policy is advisable. This is where the teacher asks all pupils to consider a question and then selects pupils to answer at random. It is also important to foster a supportive environment in which pupils understand that an incorrect answer is part of the learning process.

The questions you use should be directly applicable to what is being learned and appropriate to the cognitive level of the pupils. In addition, you need to be clear about the purpose of asking questions: whether a question is being asked for recall, to require pupils to analyse a task or to give pupils the opportunity to make innovative suggestions. A closed question is one that requires a single answer while an open question allows more variable and detailed responses, demanding higher-order thinking (see Zwozdiak-Myers and Capel, 2019). Bloom's *Taxonomy* (Bloom et al., 1956) (see Chapter 16 and the companion website: www.routledge.com/cw/capel) provides a framework from which you can design and evaluate learning and therefore distinguish between lower- and higher-order thinking skills. Lower-order thinking is usually required in answering closed questions, while higher-order thinking can be activated with open questions. Depending on the nature of the learning you are intending pupils to achieve and thus the domain you are tapping into, you need to phrase questions in an appropriate way.

Anderson et al. (2001) later revised Bloom's taxonomy and replaced the nouns used by Bloom with verbs. These describe actions which are easier to measure and therefore help planning, delivery and assessment. Table 9.1 summarises these two categorisations.

For example, a low-order (remembering) question might ask pupils if they can recall the name of the muscles in the front of the thigh or the correct learning points for a

Table 9.1 Comparison of Bloom and Anderson's taxonomies

<i>Bloom's taxonomy</i>	<i>Anderson's taxonomy</i>	
Evaluation	Creating	Higher-order  Lower-order
Synthesis	Evaluating	
Analysis	Analysing	
Application	Applying	
Comprehension	Understanding	
Knowledge	Remembering	

practical skill or technique. Higher-order questions might ask pupils to identify, for example, a movement/part of a skill that requires the use of that muscle (applying) or to design a practice to develop the skill or technique (creating).

Task 9.4 is designed to help you to understand the different sorts of question that are used in teaching.

Task 9.4 **Observing and analysing questioning**

Observe a teacher teach a lesson in your placement school.

- 1 Record all the questions that the teacher asks over a 20-minute period.
- 2 Identify the number of closed and open questions that the teacher uses during the lesson.
- 3 Evaluate the closed questions and rewrite any you feel could be expressed as open questions.
- 4 Categorise the level of cognitive demand within the questions using Anderson's taxonomy as a guide.
- 5 Select one question from either remembering or understanding and consider how it could be made more demanding in order to trigger higher-order thinking skills.

Put your observations and notes in your teaching file/PDP or equivalent and refer to it when developing questions to use in your lessons.

Feedback

Feedback is one of the most effective aspects of assessment *for* learning when it is focused on learning needs (Black et al., 2003; Hattie and Clarke, 2018). Feedback should focus on providing information to enable pupils to improve and therefore 'close the gap' between where they are in their learning and where they need to go or be. This involves effective teacher observation, discussed earlier. ILOs should be the focus of all feedback.

In physical education most feedback is provided verbally. This is commonly divided into descriptive and prescriptive forms (Schmidt and Wrisberg, 2008). Descriptive feedback describes the attainment of a pupil, whereas prescriptive also gives the pupil points for improvement. A piece of descriptive feedback might be, ‘You contacted the ball with the inside of your foot’, while a piece of prescriptive feedback would be, ‘You contacted the ball with the inside of your foot – to gain more power you need to use the laces’. Feedback can also be a powerful tool for motivation (see motivation in Chapter 11 and Gervis and Capel, 2019).

Positive, encouraging feedback incorporating the expectation that a pupil is capable of improving motivates the pupil to further effort. On the other hand, dismissive, negative feedback can leave a pupil demoralised and with little interest in continuing to work on a task. It is therefore important to ensure that as far as possible your feedback is positive as well as constructive and personalised for the needs of each pupil. Another point to bear in mind is the need to be objective in observing pupils. Try not to let expectations based on previous work influence your judgements. There is a good deal written about teachers’ perceptions of pupils and the way that teachers tend to see what they expect to see. This is called the self-fulfilling prophecy (see Gervis and Capel, 2019).

It is also necessary to provide written feedback on essays and other projects that pupils who are following examination courses write. Written feedback to pupils should always include comments and not simply a grade. Comments need to identify what has been done well, what needs to be improved and guidance on how to implement changes. Opportunities to discuss and follow up these comments must be planned into your lessons in order to ensure that pupils interact with the feedback given. Feedback is also covered in Chapter 16. Now complete Task 9.5.



Task 9.5 **Critical reflection on research into the effect of feedback on learning**

Review the article by Hattie and Timperley (2007) (below) and consider the impact of the findings in relation to your own practice. In doing this you should reflect on which feedback strategies are most important to you as a physical education teacher and which you currently consider to be central to your own development. Put your notes in your teaching file/PDP or equivalent as an example of Masters level work.

Hattie, J. and Timperley, H. (2007) ‘The power of feedback’, *Review of Educational Research*, 27 (1), 53–64.

Peer and self-assessment

While it is the case that teachers carry out most of the assessment, it is usual for broad education guidelines to recommend that pupils themselves begin to make judgements on others’ attainment and progress as well as their own. Peer and self-assessment are useful

in providing additional feedback to that which a teacher alone can offer. It is essential to remember that pupils' ability to assess others or themselves is in itself a skill that has to be learned, as pupils may not find it easy to critique the work of others' or their own work (see below and Bowler, Bassett and Newton, 2021).

Peer evaluation is a very valuable exercise and should occur prior to self-evaluation because pupils cannot see themselves perform unless they have access to video playback. The use of criteria sheets is helpful so that pupils know what they are looking for (see the reciprocal teaching style of Mosston and Ashworth, 2008, which involves peer assessment/teaching). Pupils need to develop the trust and confidence necessary to carry out this kind of assessment. This requires careful planning and a willingness to devolve responsibility to pupils. In situations of peer or self-assessment it is not your role to give direct feedback on pupil attainment. Instead, you should enquire how they feel their partner or they are progressing and what next steps need to be taken for improvement. This is where questioning can be used to good effect (see above, Chapter 1 and Zwozdiak-Myers and Capel, 2019). The role of the teacher is also to commend the pupil on astute assessment or to give guidance on how assessment techniques can be improved.

Observing and assessing a peer can have a positive effect on pupils' own attainment as it deepens their understanding of the activity/task. However, when assessing practical performance, it is not always easy to see if and why a performance was successful or not. The development of visual analysis software and mobile applications provides the opportunity for immediate, repeated and even slow-motion playback that allows pupils to assess others' and their own attainment more readily. Pupils should not be aiming merely to judge each other's work. The peer assessment process should provide pupils with the opportunity to reflect upon the requirements of a performance, and to begin to appreciate the nature and constituents of movement.

Developing peer and self-assessment involves careful planning, time and patience. Pupils need plenty of opportunities to practise this skill. Their ability to evaluate attainment and provide constructive feedback must be developed gradually and with pupil maturity in mind. You might begin by providing pupils with prompts or basic criteria. For instance, pupils may be asked, using a work card or criteria sheet, to identify the strongest aspects of, for example, a performance or piece of written work as well as a key area for development. Eventually you want pupils to make their own decisions about what needs to be improved and also how this progress can be effected.

USING ASSESSMENT *FOR* LEARNING TO INFORM TEACHERS' IN-LESSON DECISIONS

You also draw on assessment *for* learning skills in the ongoing teaching situation to judge the appropriateness of the ILOs of a lesson. This requires good skills, including good observation and sound knowledge of the activity being assessed. If this in-lesson assessment indicates that the ILOs are too ambitious, you may need to modify your aspirations for the lesson. This is not unusual, even with experienced teachers. Classes sometimes do not respond as anticipated. There is no point in staying with your plans if there is clearly no way that pupils can reach the intended levels of work. Normally this means dropping one ILO or making an ILO less demanding.

Now complete Task 9.6.



Task 9.6 **Action research**

Select one of the four characteristics of assessment *for* learning identified by Spackman (2002; see above) that you feel will improve your practice. Identify two or three goals to focus on in relation to your chosen characteristic, e.g. questioning: improving the use of open questions; ensuring that all pupils are engaged during questioning; employing higher-order questions to challenge higher attaining pupils.

Plan a short unit of work for a series of lessons and, using the action research cycle, conduct a small research project aimed at improving your practice. To help you with this, read Chapter 20 and Zwozdiak-Myers (2021a) (the activities should also be useful). You may also wish to do some further reading to help identify your goals and to understand the research literature.

After each lesson carefully review and evaluate progress against your goals, making adjustments to your planning as necessary. Some researchers call this plan-do-review (Elliott, 1991). You will find it much easier if your mentor or another student teacher acts as an observer. Evaluate the results and identify how you might apply the findings to other lessons/groups of pupils.

Further guidance on reflective practice is provided in Chapter 20 and Zwozdiak-Myers (2021b). Put your plans and notes in your teaching file/PDP or equivalent as evidence of Masters level work.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

As indicated at the start of the chapter, the purpose of assessment *of* learning or summative assessment is to record attainment at a particular time, usually the end of a unit, term or year, such as in school reports. Summative assessment records learning. This is often a formal process that is likely to require record keeping as specified by individual schools. In practical physical education this is likely to be associated with how well pupils have met the ILOs for units or lessons.

Assessment *of* learning may be carried out for evaluation, grading, prediction, selection or formal reporting (see the section on purposes of assessment earlier in the chapter). Assessments for awarding bodies require you to work with specific assessment criteria. These will most commonly be for 14–19 examination courses, leadership courses and governing body award schemes. You are expected to make judgements about pupils' learning in order to inform a grade or level or indicate progress towards a goal. Assessment of pupils on a particular unit of work needs to be carried out against the unit objectives. Assessment of an individual, small group or whole group in a lesson needs to be carried out against the ILOs of that lesson.

Although summative assessments are primarily used to confirm learning, they also provide an opportunity for you to reflect on your practice and make adaptations for future lessons in light of the changing needs of your pupils. Summative assessments, such as an in-class test, can also be used to help pupils identify areas which require further development and plan for improvement. When used in this way, summative assessments can promote reflective learning and help pupils to prioritise areas for development. Black et al. (2003) referred to this process as the formative use of summative

assessment. Further examples might include pupils applying marking criteria to assess others' or their own work or pupils setting their own questions and developing their own assessment criteria.

BUILDING ASSESSMENT INTO UNIT PLANNING

Having worked through this chapter you should understand fully that assessment is not a 'bolt-on' process but is integral to effective teaching and learning. Therefore, it is helpful for you to consider the range of assessment that physical education teachers undertake in their day-to-day teaching. As a student teacher you are probably not involved in mapping assessment across units and schemes of work. However, even at this early stage it is useful to be thinking about this. You must first be clear about what you want your pupils to learn. This is expressed as your unit objectives. You must also consider the context in which you are teaching including the pupils, their prior learning, the activity focus and the resources. At the planning stage you must clarify which of the unit objectives you are going to assess and record for individual pupils. These objectives are the focus of your evaluation. Once these have been identified you must then decide on the assessment strategy to be used for each objective, e.g. questioning, teacher observation, peer or self-assessment. All assessment that you intend to carry out should be built into the structure or framework of your units of work and should be carried out throughout the unit.

All objectives from the unit should also be evaluated from a class perspective in order for you to be able to assess the quality of your teaching relative to pupil achievement. This follows the same process as evaluating lesson ILOs, that is, an evaluation of what the pupils achieved, material and challenges they should move on to next and how your teaching affected their learning (see Chapter 6).

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

After working through this chapter you should understand:

- the principles and wide range of purposes of assessment;
- the need to ensure assessments are valid and reliable;
- the role assessment plays in improving teaching and learning in physical education;
- how assessment *for* learning can be applied in your day-to-day teaching. (It is recommended that you specifically focus on shared ILOs, questioning, feedback and peer and self-assessment, as these enhance pupil learning and improve your teaching);
- the need for appropriate and specific assessment criteria, whether the assessment is formal or informal;
- that judgements can then be made and feedback provided in order to move learning forward;
- the need to assess against unit objectives or ILOs of a lesson in order to inform pupil learning, as well as your own planning and teaching;
- the importance of assessment and being in a position to place it at the centre of the learning process.

Check which requirements of your ITE you have addressed through this chapter.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (1998) *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment*, London: Kings College; and

Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (2002) *Working Inside the Black Box: Assessment for Learning in the Classroom*, London: Kings College.

These two publications give detailed information on the use of assessment *for* learning in improving the understanding of how assessment can enhance and improve the teaching and learning process. Although not physical education-specific, they can add to your understanding of assessment.

Frapwell, A. (2015) *A Practical Guide to Assessing Without Levels: Supporting and Safeguarding High Quality Achievement in Physical Education*, Leeds: Coachwise Limited.

This book was designed to help departments manage the change from the use of levels-based assessment to a more holistic assessment that encourages a growth mind-set. The book provides a National Curriculum and Policy context in relation to assessment in physical education as well as exploring a framework for assessing across learning domains. Examples are provided from practice.

Gardner, J. (ed.) (2012) *Assessment and Learning*, 2nd edition, London: Sage Publications.

This book contains chapters authored by members of the ARG, a group of researchers who focus on ensuring policy and practice take account of current research evidence. The book concentrates on the use of assessment in supporting learning. It provides practice-based theory about developing motivation and assessment in relation to learning theory.

Spendlove, D. (2015) *Assessment for Learning: 100 Ideas for Secondary Teachers*, London: Bloomsbury.

This book provides practical ideas for teachers to apply effective assessment *for* learning practices, under the areas of: questioning, thinking and dialogue; feedback; improving teaching and increasing pupil ownership and autonomy.

Wragg, E.C. (2001) *Assessment and Learning in the Secondary School*, London: RoutledgeFalmer.

This book looks at the different purposes of assessment, then describes and analyses the different means of assessing progress. The book is designed to help you reflect on assessment and then take action to improve teaching and learning in your own lessons.

Other books which you may find helpful are those in/related to the *Learning to Teach* Series, which include:

Capel, S., Cliffe, J. and Lawrence, J. (eds.) (2021) *A Practical Guide to Teaching Physical Education in the Secondary School*, Abingdon: Routledge.

This book is a companion to this current text *Learning to Teach Physical Education*. It provides more practical guidance to support student physical education teachers' development.

Capel, S., Leask, M. and Younie, S. (eds.) (2019) *Learning to Teach in the Secondary School: A Companion to School Experience*, 8th edition, Abingdon: Routledge.

This book is designed as a core textbook to support student teachers through their ITE.

Capel, S., Lawrence, J., Leask, M. and Younie, S. (eds.) (2020) *Surviving and Thriving in the Secondary School: The NQT's Essential Companion*, Abingdon: Routledge.

This book is designed to support beginning teachers in the early years of their teaching careers.

Capel, S. and Lawrence, J. (eds.) (2019) *Mentoring Physical Education Teachers in the Secondary School: A Practical Guide*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Although primarily written for mentors, some of the text and tasks would also be useful for student teachers.

The companion website www.routledge.com/cw/capel contains any additional resources and an editable version of any relevant tasks/tables in this chapter.