

How can we best use our freedom to assess without levels?

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National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Beyond Levels: alternative assessment approaches developed by teaching schools

Research Report

September 2014

**Julie Lilly, Alison Peacock – The Wroxham
transformative learning alliance**

**Sue Shoveller, Dr d'Reen Struthers –
South Farnham teaching school alliance**

Research projects

- Jan – July 2014
- 34 teaching school alliances
- 17 led by a primary school, 15 by a secondary school, 2 by a special school
- 5 conferences held towards end of year where alliances reported on methods and findings

Beyond Levels: Ashford Teaching Alliance

- Brockhill Performing Arts College
 - Goldwyn Community School
 - Highworth Grammar School
- Research group consisted of teachers of English (2) Maths, Science, MFL, History (2), Computer Science, Citizenship, Drama and PE drawn from the 3 participating schools

Research methods

- Devised survey instruments to find out views of staff, students and parents on assessment
- Using data from surveys and ideas from assessment research to agree principles for pilot studies
- Implemented and evaluated pilot studies in Term 6

**What do you consider the most important purposes of assessment?
 Select up to 4 purposes and rank them with 1 being the most important.**

	1	2	3	4
To allow management to monitor the performance of teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To decide which set / stream students should be placed in.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To monitor the progress of students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To prepare for public exams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To help teachers with the planning of subsequent lessons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To provide information for parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To allow Ofsted to monitor the performance of departments / schools.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To allow teachers to evaluate aspects of their teaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To foster motivation in students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To identify students needing interventions / support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To provide feedback to students so they can plan for future learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)				

Staff survey

Responses to question asking what staff consider the most important purposes of assessment


Brockhill

	% selecting in top 4	% selecting most import
1. To provide feedback to students so they can plan for future learning	88	
2. To monitor the progress of students	75	
3. To identify students needing interventions / support	63	
4. To foster motivation in students	44	

Goldwyn

	% selecting in top 4	% selecting most import
1. To monitor the progress of students	100	1
2. To identify students needing interventions / support	83	
3. To help teachers with the planning of subsequent lessons	83	
4. To provide information for parents	50	

Highworth

	% selecting in top 4	% selecting most import
 1. To provide feedback to students so they can plan for future learning	77	
2. To monitor the progress of students	73	
3. To identify students needing interventions / support	70	
4. To help teachers with the planning of subsequent lessons	47	

Key principles

- Primary purpose of assessment is to enable students to make as much progress as possible in their learning
 - Should make clear to students exactly how they can make progress in relation to their next unit of learning
 - Needs to be motivating to students
- Needs to recognize differences between subjects
- Needs to fit into an overarching framework for monitoring purposes across the secondary school

Tools to support individual progress

- I. Recordable Assessment for Learning
 - Needs to relate to a particular unit of learning
 - Students should be clear from the beginning of the unit on the learning objectives
 - Should facilitate self and peer assessment
 - Should provide students and teachers with specific information about strengths and weaknesses
 - Teacher assessment on the unit as a whole should be translatable into an overall monitoring system

Principles that could be applied across subjects

- Each skill could be assessed on a 'Starting, developing, mastered' scale
- Mastered requires demonstration in more than one context, including test conditions (where appropriate)
- This could be translated into a numeric figure or percentage for the unit to allow progress of individuals to be compared

Y7 History: Term 3 – The Tudors

Unit Focus: Using sources to reach conclusions about the past

	Starting	Developing	Mastered
Drawing inferences	Extracting key information from the sources	Interpreting sources with some attempts to use knowledge	Consistently interpreting sources in the light of accurate knowledge
Comparing sources	Making at least one basic comparison between two sources.	Making either one more complex comparison or several basic comparisons.	Making two or more complex comparisons.
Evaluating how certain you can be about conclusions from the sources	Attempting to make at least one use of the origin of a source to inform judgements.	Making some valid use of the origins of sources to inform judgements	Making valid use of the origins of sources to inform judgements.

On-going areas of development

	Starting	Developing	Mastered
Knowledge	General	Explaining facts	Explaining with some complexity
Communication	Conveying meaning, but with frequent errors	Showing some degree of accuracy with some use of appropriate vocabulary and structure.	Showing a large degree of accuracy with appropriate vocabulary, style and structure.
Attitude to Learning	On occasions, avoiding challenges	Accepting challenges	Relishing challenges and taking the initiative.

Unit Focus: Source Analysis

	Starting	Developing	Mastered
Drawing inferences			
Comparing sources			
Evaluating how certain you can be about conclusions from the sources			

On-going areas of development

	Starting	Developing	Mastered
Knowledge			
Differences between the Protestant and Catholic Church.			
Reasons for Henry VIII's decision to break with Rome			
Subsequent religious changes			
Communication			
SPAG			
Structure			
Vocabulary and writing style			
Attitude to Learning			

German

1. I can talk about appearances of myself and my family members, using a variety of adjectives (little repetition of adjectives)		
S: I can talk about myself	D: I can talk about myself and family.	M: I can talk about myself and family, using a wide range of vocabulary and the correct personal pronouns.
2. I can express and justify opinions about family members using a range of opinion phrases.		
S: 2 phrases (positive or negative)	D: 4 phrases with reasons (positive and negative)	M: 6 or more justified phrases (positive and negative)
3. I can express myself in longer sentences which use a range of connectives correctly (und, aber, denn, weil, obwohl)		
S: 2 connectives	D: 3 connectives (including <u>weil</u> OR <u>obwohl</u>)	M: 5+ connectives, with the correct word order)
4. I can make my responses more interesting, using quantifiers and qualifiers		
S: 2+	D: 4+	M: 6+
5. The accuracy of my verbs is excellent- the subject matches my verb ending		
S: Sometimes (' <u>ich</u> ' form is correct)	D: Mostly correct (<u>ich</u> and 3 rd person forms are correct)	M: Always (<u>ich</u> , 3 rd person and plural forms are correct)
6. I can use the past tense to say what I was like when I was little		
S: I can use 'war'	D: I can use 'war', ' <u>hatte</u> ' and one other past tense verb	M: I can use 5+ forms of the past tense

Year 7 – Bubbles & Bangs

Lesson	Starting	Developing	Mastered
1	work safely with chemicals and follow instructions for practical work	explain that chemical reactions result in the formation of new substances	evaluate the results of their experiments to decide whether a chemical reaction has taken place
	observe and record chemical and physical changes	communicate why some chemical reactions are either useful or harmful	classify a range of different reactions as useful or harmful.
2	carry out gas tests and make observations to identify hydrogen and carbon dioxide	explain the difference between reactants and products	interpret secondary qualitative data on reaction rates to identify metals
	describe how acids react with some metals and limestone.	identify hydrogen or carbon dioxide as the gas formed when acids react with metals or limestone	describe the manufacture and some uses of hydrogen.
3	describe burning as a chemical reaction that requires oxygen and test for it	compare reactions which need a continuous supply of energy with those which only need an initial energy input	write word equations for reactions in which metals are oxidised
	carry out simple flame tests.	describe the materials formed when metals burn as oxides	explain the changes in mass and volume of air that take place during oxidation reactions.
4	describe a fuel as something that releases energy when it burns	use evidence to explain that burning fuels like methane produces carbon dioxide and water and write word equations	know that a chemical containing only carbon and hydrogen is called a hydrocarbon
	name the three sides of the fire triangle.	describe some safety problems that can arise when dealing with fires, and evaluate practical working methods for safety.	explain how the experience of fires in the past made has planners apply scientific principles to reduce the risks in the future.
5	recognise that burning can cause pollution, such as smoke	explain why carbon monoxide can sometimes form when a fuel burns and the dangers of incomplete combustion	explain how different theories have been communicated to explain combustion at different times
	record and present data on the effect of varying the size of a beaker on the burning time for a candle.	explain why a candle goes out when covered with a beaker	explain why some reactions are explosive and how explosives have been developed

II. Overall framework for monitoring

- An overall framework for monitoring should apply across the whole of KS3 and KS4
- Concerns about effects on motivation of identifying students in relation to GCSE grades in early years of secondary school
- Also lack of knowledge of precise requirements for new GCSE grades
- Possible solution: use of pass / credit / distinction banding in early years to then translate to GCSE grades

Progress in History



	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Knowledge of periods	Has knowledge and understanding of a range of substantive content relating to particular periods and has some awareness of the importance of context (e.g., political, religious, social) when forming historical judgements	Has knowledge and understanding of a wider range of substantive content relating to a number of periods and has a growing awareness of the importance of context (e.g., technological, cultural) when forming historical judgements	Has deeper knowledge and understanding of a wider range of substantive content relating to a range of periods and has a growing awareness of the importance of different aspects of context (e.g., economic, scientific, cultural) when forming historical judgements	Has deeper knowledge and understanding of a wider range of substantive content relating to a range of periods and has a growing awareness of the importance of context (e.g., ideological, aesthetic) when forming historical judgements	Has deep knowledge and understanding of a wide range of substantive content and is very aware of the importance of multiple aspects of context in forming historical judgements
Understanding of substantive concepts	Understands concepts such as peasant, empire, king, parliament in relation to some historical contexts	Understands concepts such as peasant, empire, king, parliament, civil war in relation to a range of historical contexts	Understands increasingly abstract concepts such as revolution, democracy, imperialism in relation to some historical contexts	Understands increasingly abstract concepts such as revolution, democracy, imperialism, capitalism, communism in relation to a range of historical contexts	Understands the complexities of a wide range concepts recognising similarities and differences in their meaning in relation to different periods and places
Understanding of evidence	Draws inferences from simple sources through some cross-referencing and consideration of provenance, recognising that some inferences can be drawn with greater certainty than others	Draws inferences from sources through some cross-referencing and consideration of provenance, making judgements as to the degree of certainty that can be attached to them	Draws inferences from sources through cross-referencing and consideration of provenance and context, making judgements as to the degree of certainty that can be attached to them	Draws increasingly subtle inferences from varied sources through cross-referencing and consideration of provenance and context, making judgements as to the degree of certainty that can be attached to them	Draws nuanced inferences from varied sources through cross-referencing and consideration of provenance and context, making well-informed judgements as to the degree of certainty that can be attached to them.

High Achieving Drama Students – Profile Descriptors

Year 10

- Demonstrate an outstanding involvement in practical exploration. Consistent focus and commitment.
- Evidence of extensive and far reaching research applied to develop understanding of social, cultural, historical context of texts and to impact significantly on the creative development of performance.
- Demonstrate a full awareness of a wide range of production values and the ability to analyse in detail the impact this may have on an audience.
- Evidence of extensive and far reaching research applied to develop understanding of social, cultural, historical context of texts and to impact significantly on the creative development of performance work.
- All written work is accurate, detailed, concise and analytical drawing together knowledge/ experience and research from the course as a whole to reflect understanding of how drama communicates.
- Performance / Design skills – demonstrate an outstanding and thorough command of specific skill appropriate to the performance demands. (Different for each option)

Year 12

- Demonstrate an outstanding involvement in practical exploration. Consistent focus and commitment.
- Evidence of extensive and far reaching research applied to develop understanding of social, cultural, historical context of texts and to impact significantly on the creative development of performance.
- Demonstrate a full awareness of a wide range of production values and the ability to analyse in detail the impact this may have on an audience.
- Evidence of extensive and far reaching research applied to develop understanding of social, cultural, historical context of texts and to impact significantly on the creative development of performance work.
- All written work is accurate, detailed, concise and analytical drawing together knowledge/ experience and research from the course so far to reflect understanding of how drama communicates.
- Performance / Design skills – demonstrate an outstanding and thorough command of specific skill appropriate to the performance demands. (Different for each option)

Year 11

- Demonstrate an outstanding involvement in practical exploration. Consistent focus and commitment. (Leadership/ motivation of group/ significant contribution of creative ideas)
- Evidence of personal research applied to develop understanding of social, cultural, historical context of texts.
- Demonstrate an understanding of production values and the ability to analyse in detail the impact this may have on an audience.
- Demonstrate creative response to set text demonstrating confident understanding of dramatic intentions and a perceptive awareness of how it would be realised in performance.
- All written work is accurate, detailed, concise and analytical in response to how drama communicates. Drama vocabulary used with confidence and accuracy.
- Performance / Design skills – demonstrate an outstanding and thorough command of specific skill appropriate to the performance demands. (Different for each option)

Year 10

- Demonstrate an outstanding involvement in practical exploration. Consistent focus and commitment. (Leadership/ motivation of group/ significant contribution of creative ideas)
- Demonstrate a highly imaginative approach to exploring form and style in response to detailed research into practitioner/ genre
- Demonstrate an understanding of production values and the ability to analyse in detail the impact this may have on an audience.
- All written work is accurate, detailed, concise and analytical in response to how drama communicates. Drama vocabulary used with confidence and accuracy.
- Performance / Design skills – demonstrate an outstanding and thorough command of specific skill appropriate to the performance demands. (Different for each option)

Year 9

- Demonstrate excellent engagement in practical exploration. Consistent focus and commitment. (Leadership/ motivation of group/ significant contribution of creative ideas)
- Demonstrate a highly imaginative approach to exploring form and style
- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate drama work (discuss, describe and explain) and an awareness of how it communicates to an audience.
- Demonstrate a confident command of drama vocabulary used with confidence and accuracy.
- Performance Skills (Acting) – Confident command of voice, movement and gesture to embody character appropriate to demands of the performance style. To be at ease in role listening and responding to other cast members.

Year 8

- Demonstrate excellent engagement in practical exploration. Consistent focus and commitment. (Leadership/ motivation of group/ significant contribution of creative ideas)
- Demonstrate an interest in exploring form and style (experimenting)
- Demonstrate the ability to reflect on drama work identifying and describing strengths and weaknesses.
- Demonstrate a confident command of drama vocabulary explored in lessons
- Performance Skills (Acting) – Sustain a role with credibility, demonstrate use of movement and vocal skills developed to demonstrate character.

Year	SPEAKING	WRITING	LISTENING/READING	GRAMMAR
7	Ability to hold a very short, simple conversation on familiar topics. Responses will be short, but students should be starting to extend answers with connectives.	Students should be able to write a short text on familiar topics and may need to refer to reference material for support. Accuracy should be good and students should be attempting to extend their answers with connectives	Comprehension of short texts/listening extracts on familiar topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present tense: regular verbs • connectives: und, aber, denn, weil, obwohl, dass. • comparatives, superlatives • simple imperfect sentences (and als) • conditional using 'ich möchte' • quantifiers and qualifiers
8	Students can hold a short conversation on familiar topics with increasingly developed answers. They will demonstrate control of a wider range of connectives and sentence structures, though their answers may yet be repetitive in variety.	Students will be able to write short texts on familiar topics and may refer to reference material for support. Accuracy should be increasingly developed and whilst there may be repetition, students should be using a greater variety of vocabulary and structure.	Comprehension of medium length texts/listening extracts on familiar topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perfect tense • modal verbs • future tense (using werden) • connectives: wenn, wo • common conditional forms
9	Students can hold a conversation on a prepared topic (approx. 4-5 minutes) and will be starting to be spontaneous in their responses. Responses will be increasingly developed and repetition will be avoided. Accuracy will be good, and mistakes will largely occur in more complex sentences.	Students will be able to write on familiar topics and express a variety of opinions and experiences. Sentences will be developed and will demonstrate confidence in a range of tenses.	Comprehension of longer texts/listening extracts of familiar and unfamiliar topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perfect + imperfect tense • future tense • modal verbs (in past) • um...zu... • adjective endings • prepositions
10	Growing confidence in spontaneous speech, students will be able to hold a conversation on familiar and unprepared topics. Whilst accuracy might impede communication, mistakes largely occur in more complex sentences.	Students are starting to write with a high degree of accuracy and less reliance on reference material. Mistakes will occur in attempts and more complex structures and	Students cope with a range of texts and listening extracts which are based on familiar and unfamiliar topics of increasing difficulty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of all three tenses, irregular and regular. • Case system and adjective endings • prepositions with case endings
11	Confidence in spontaneous speech with an ability to hold a simple conversation on familiar and unprepared topics (6-8 minutes). Responses will contain a range of vocabulary and structures and accuracy will be high and should not impede communication. Conversations will also be 'functional' language.	Students can write for a variety of purposes with a high degree of accuracy and range of structures. Reliance on reference material will be minimal.	Students cope with confidence with a range of material, familiar and unfamiliar which is authentic and contains a wide range of vocabulary and structures.	

Student Progress in Chemistry

Year	Equations	Types of Reaction	Chemical processes and methods	Bonding and materials	Quantitative Chemistry	Organic Chemistry
7	Simple Word eqns Simple Symbol eqns	Neutralisation Acid + Metal Acid + Carbonate	Using simple equipment Measuring temp Measuring pH Measuring mass	Solid, liquid, gas Metals and non-metals Elements	Calculating mass changes Calculating temp changes Density	Fuels
8	Word eqns Symbol eqns Simple balancing	Respiration Photosynthesis	Filtration Evaporation Distillation Chromatography	Compounds Mixtures Solutions	Conservation of mass Interpreting simple trends	
9	Complex word eqns Balanced symbol eqns	Combustion Reduction Thermal decomposition Addition polymerisation Limestone cycle Environmental (CO ₂)	Fermentation Cracking Reduction Fractional distillation Thermal decomposition Polymerisation Emulsions	Structure of the atom Simple ionic Simple covalent Alloys Polymers	Interpreting trends and anomalies from graphs Interpreting b.p. and m.p.	Alkanes Alkenes Bromine test
10	Simple half eqns Complex balanced eqns	Exo- and endothermic Reversible Precipitation	Preparing salts Measuring rates of reaction Simplified GC Simplified MS	Ionic Metallic Giant Covalent Simple covalent molecular	Relative atomic mass Relative formula mass Empirical formula Reacting mass % yield and % composition	
11	Simple ionic eqns	Redox Equilibria Displacement	Chemical ID tests Water treatments Titrations Haber Process		Titration calculations Bond enthalpy calculations	Carboxylic acid Alcohols Esters