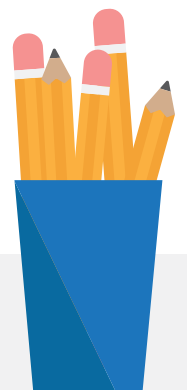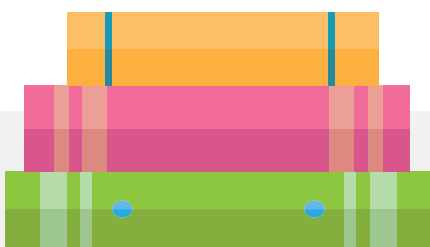*A HOW-TO GUIDE FROM EDUCATIONCITY*

Assessment for Learning

Here at EducationCity, we do our best to support schools with the latest curriculum and teaching practices.

We know that recent changes mean that Ofsted will be focusing more on the impact of assessment data and how it's used to inform teaching and learning, rather than the data itself. But how do you make sure you get the most out of the data you're collecting in your classroom?

This guide has some ideas and tools that might help!

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Different Types of Assessments

Let's start by looking at the different types of assessments you might use in the classroom...

Formative, Short-Term Assessments

Provide quick and immediate data so that teachers can adjust their lesson plans and provide timely feedback.

Also called: real-time assessments; diagnostic testlets; quick, informal assessments; and continuous assessments.

💡 EducationCity offers formative assessments for maths and English for Years 2-6.

Interim, Medium-Term Assessments

Guide learning based on performance relative to a set of very specific academic goals and help assess mastery over a longer period of time.

Also called: benchmark assessments, diagnostic assessments, unit or quarter assessments, and interval assessments.

💡 EducationCity's maths content includes ten unit assessments for Years 1-6.

Summative, Long-Term Assessments

Help you determine content mastery over an even longer period of time, and are sometimes referred to as an assessment of learning.

Also called: end-of-term/end-of-year assessments, and high-stakes assessments.

💡 EducationCity has summative or end-of-year assessments within in English, maths and Science for Years 1-6.

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Assessment Goals and Best Practices

The goal of assessment for learning, or formative assessment, is to collect data that helps you identify what to improve for future lessons, or what you should come back to or re-teach, and to which students!

EducationCity's pre-prepared, self-marking formative, unit and summative assessments can help with this, as teachers receive a score per student and can also see each and every answer that the student gave (if they don't score 100%).

In addition to this, many assessments generate a personalised Revision Journal for each student. This is a collection of Activities and Learn Screens from EducationCity, that targets the areas the child needs to improve.

Take a look at some examples and best practices below.

	Short-Term Assessments	Medium and Long-Term Assessments
Time	In the moment, during a lesson.	On a half-termly or termly basis.
	- Blind thumbs-up/thumbs-down activity - Thumbs-up/thumbs down activity - Hand thermometers - Individual whiteboard activity - Traffic lights	- Unit tests - Running records/learning journals - Projects - in pairs or individual - Common assessments - Benchmark assessments
Best Practices	Re-teach the skills in real time in a different way. Use your data to create small groups for round robins/carousels. Then you or a Teaching Assistant can re-teach or reinforce the corresponding lessons or skills during group time. Assign selected students additional practice (both online and print-based) to help fill knowledge gaps. Create small groups that can focus on specific skills or lessons.	Adjust your medium-term lesson plans based on interim assessment results. Identify which content you can spiral review in your daily lessons. Backfill larger content gaps using a multidisciplinary approach. Give students ownership over their learning by getting them to mark their own work, or peer assess the work of others in the class.

TIP: Formative assessments don't have to be formal, pen-and-paper assessments. Why not try new informal tactics like those listed above.

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Questions to Ask Yourself

With so much data, where do you start analysing without feeling overwhelmed?

The following checklist will help you get started:

✓ What are my students' individual learning goals?

✓ What do my students know/want to know about a specific topic?

✓ Which groups of students have a good handle on a specific concept, and which do I need to pull together and provide extra support to?

✓ What misconceptions do my students have about a specific concept before we get started?

✓ Are my students understanding this lesson, or do I need to adjust my teaching approach?

✓ How effective was my teaching today and over the unit as a whole?

✓ What challenges do I need to address before my student or group of students are able to continue making progress?

✓ Are my students still on track and making progress relative to a specific set of goals? Are there any Patterns?

💡 EducationCity's assessments can help keep you on track! Explore the assessments we offer per subject and experiment with them. You don't have to use the full assessment, but could instead pull out a specific question of interest for a lesson starter or plenary.

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Informing Lesson Planning Through

So now that you have your data, what kind of activities will fit with your teaching style and engage your learners?

Formative assessment has a specific goal:

Capture data to inform teaching and learning.

Five Tips for Success

According to research, effective assessment activities must have:

1. **Learning progression:** Your students' understanding should be gradually increasing so that they reach the ultimate goal of your lessons.

2. **Goals and criteria for success:** Communicate clearly defined goals for success with your students.

3. **Descriptive feedback:** Provide feedback linked to your goals and criteria for success.

4. **Self- and peer-assessment**: Engage students in feedback and review by asking them for higher-order thinking and reflection of their own learning.

5. **Collaboration:** Create a partnership between teachers and students, so you're working together towards the ultimate goal.

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Formative Assessment in Practice

Many of the schools we work with use a variety of formative assessment tools to guide their teaching and learning.

Take a look at some of them below...
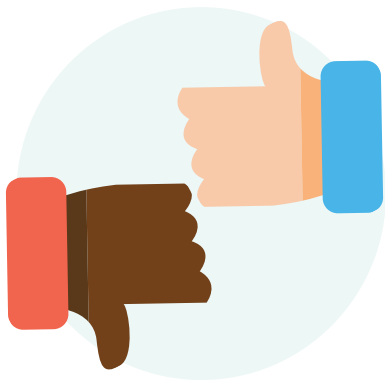
Thumbs Up and Down

A teacher is not sure the class is understanding the lesson on the difference between fiction and non-fiction stories. The teacher asks students to hold their hands under their chins and give a "thumbs up" if the story could be identified as a non-fiction story or give a "thumbs down" if the story is a fictional tale. The teacher does a quick tally of the group and notices there is a pretty even split. The teacher decides to open the classroom to a discussion, with the students presenting arguments for both sides.

TIP: This teacher is using a formative assessment approach to collect evidence of learning to then adjust their lesson planning. This integrates techniques like an informal tally, hand raising, and a thumbs up or down to quickly gauge students' understanding.

Classroom Quizzes

A teacher carries out a weekly quiz addressing all of the material covered that week. The quizzes are supposed to motivate students to practice key skills and concepts, as well as provide them with a sample of the question types they may encounter on the unit test. Following the quiz, the teacher moves on to the next lesson as planned.

TIP: This isn't an example of formative assessment because the teacher doesn't use the evidence from the quizzes to adjust future lesson plans, or provide direction to students for them to think about their own learning. The only information the students receive is a score for the number of correct answers.

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Formative Assessment in Practice

Structured Pair Work

Following a whole-class lesson, students split into pairs to discuss specific questions. They analyse each other's responses and come to a consensus between themselves. As the students work with their partners, the teacher walks around and notes common misunderstandings and gaps in understanding. At the end, the teacher uses the information to help redirect thinking and reinforce ideas.

TIP: This is an example of formative assessment where the questions asked and the peer conversations are used to elicit evidence of the students' understanding. The students are able to self-reflect and get feedback from their peers. The teacher is able to listen to the conversations between students to note the current level of understanding of the class and of individual students. The teacher uses the information immediately to assist students in their learning by redirecting thinking, reinforcing ideas, and/or providing cues.

Hands Up

A teacher has just completed a unit on fractions and wants to assess whether students have an understanding of the content. The teacher asks a prepared question and sees how many students raise their hands and volunteer an answer. After calling on one of the volunteers, who gets the answer correct, the teacher is confident the class understands the lesson and is ready to move on.

TIP: While an informal poll, like a hand raise, can give you some information, it might not give you the full picture. The students who volunteer are typically the students who understand the content clearly; the ones who need help may or may not ever ask for help. The limited data received from this exercise makes it difficult to determine how to adjust lesson planning to meet the needs of individual students. Therefore, this is not a strong example of formative assessment.

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Reflection Exercise

A Look at Your Progress

Based on what you've read so far, why not take some time to identify what you'd like to start, stop, and continue doing to improve data collection and inform your lesson planning?

START	STOP	CONTINUE

What formative assessment activities have you implemented in the past? Think about the focused questions you were trying to answer. Did you use the data to adjust your lesson plans, and did you share that data with your students? Did your assessment include the attributes of an effective formative assessment?

_____

_____

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Make Your Data Actionable

Now that you've got all of your data, what do you do with it?

Many teachers we speak to feel overwhelmed by the amount of data available to them and how they can use it to truly impact teaching and learning.

Why not take some time to fill in the questions below to help you think about whether the data you've collected is actionable and how you can use it to support your students?

Questions to Ask

Do your assessments align with your overarching teaching and learning goals and have your goals been communicated?

- [ ] **YES**
- [ ] **NO**

What types of data have you collected?
Are they all actionable?

- [ ] **YES**
- [ ] **NO**

Which areas need improvement and why?

What types of support can you implement using the student data that you have collected?

How are you using your data to support learning challenges over time?

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Organising Your Data to Identify Gaps

Now that you know your data is actionable, let's move on to interpretation...

1 Try turning your data into separate tables and charts.

2 Incorporate colour-coding. Highlight areas of need, groups of students, learning objectives, and mastery all in different colour combinations to allow for quick insights.

3 Layer different forms of data. Break down data into separate tables for learning objectives, student groupings, and missed items so that it's much easier to focus on key data sets without getting too overwhelmed.

4 Consider using digital tools to make data analysis instantaneous. Many digital tools provide technology that can do the sorting and analysis for you, saving you time and energy better spent on planning and lesson delivery. Look for data dashboards that quickly break down data in real time and provide useful colour-coded, graphic depictions of data.

TIP: Effective interpretation of data begins with analysing student data for commonly missed items, common mistakes and patterns in both student groups and individual student work.

You've identified your knowledge gaps, but what's causing them?

Root cause analysis is a great tool to use for this. Here's an example of what it might look like in the real world:

Problem: You just baked a new batch of cookies, and they did not turn out well.

Possible cause:
1. The oven temperature was incorrect. (Test: Adjust your oven temperature.)
2. You missed out an ingredient. (Test: Adjust your ingredients one by one until you find the culprit.)

Problem:	
Possible Causes	Tests
1.	
2.	
3.	

💡 EducationCity can really help here, as many of its assessments generate personalised Revision Journals by analysing the questions the students have answered incorrectly. These collections of Activities and Learn Screens address the problem learning objectives - perfect for independent revision or revision at home!

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Tracking Your Data

Now that you've analysed and decided on some actions from your data, you can track them in this worksheet to create a meaningful action plan for your students.

Assessment Name:

Assessment Date:

Assessment Tool:

Subject Area/Year Group:

Reporting Category Area of Focus	Reporting Category Areas of Strength

Proficiency:

Area Needing Improvement – High Priority	Correct/Total	Correct %
Area Needing Improvement – High Priority	Correct/Total	Correct %
Area Needing Improvement – High Priority	Correct/Total	Correct %
Area Needing Improvement – High Priority	Correct/Total	Correct %

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Tracking Your Data

Student Performance:

Working Below	Working Towards	Working At	Working Above
Percentage	*Percentage*	*Percentage*	*Percentage*
Student Names	*Student Names*	*Student Names*	*Student Names*

Action Plan:

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About EducationCity

EducationCity is passionate about working with schools to improve student attainment and save teachers time. Our resources have been designed to support personalised learning by integrating assessment and curriculum content.

Target Lesson Objectives Easily

Find relevant content that links to your curriculum by using our Curriculum Map or Search tool.

Comprehensive and clearly organised by strand, content is so easy to access!

Set Work in Advance

When planning your lessons, choose your Activities in advance and put them into a MyCity so they're easy for students to access. Choose a meaningful name for each MyCity and you'll be able to update and retrieve them year after year!
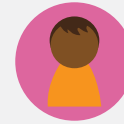
Differentiated Teaching

Monitor progress with SuccessTracker and you'll be able to identify the strengths and areas of development for each of your students and so choose relevant activities to help them progress.

Flexible Learning

EducationCity is accessible via desktops, laptops, tablets and whiteboards, so can support you whatever equipment is available in your classroom.

Lesson Plans

Access our ready-made Lesson Plans and topical content to support teaching and learning in the classroom.

There's more to EducationCity than Activities alone!

Assessment

Check students' learning with formative, summative and unit assessments. Curriculum-correlated, pre-prepared and easy to set, they give instant feedback to inform your next steps.

Want to find out more about EducationCity?

Start a free trial for your school today and see it for yourself. Simply call us on +44 (0)1572 725080 or email trials@educationcity.com to arrange.

Website: **www.educationcity.com**
Email: **trials@educationcity.com**

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