

## Module 4 training session

# ECT training overview for Module 4

2-hour session (Week 2)

## How to use this overview

There are pre-session tasks for the facilitator (essential) and ECTs (desirable). You will need to refer to the Module 4 Summary Module Guide. This provides the foundation to this ECT training session. The Learning Intentions refer directly to the 'learn that...' and 'learn how to...' statements from the ECF. This session sets out what must be covered by the facilitator in the 2-hour session.

The training session outline details what must be covered. All references to how this might be delivered are optional.

## Preparation for the facilitator

You should read the Module 4 Summary Module Guide, noting where this training session sits in relation to other sessions within Module 4.

## Preparation for the ECTs

You might ask ECTs to undertake a pre-session task building from Week 1 self-directed study materials, such as:

Consider the next assessment you are undertaking. Is it formative/summative?  
What is the purpose of the assessment?

## Learning Intentions for this session

This session is sequenced early in the module. The title of the week in which this session occurs is: Fundamental principles of effective assessment (s). The session focuses on effective assessment and the ways this informs lesson planning.

The ECT will learn that:

- 6.2** Good assessment helps teachers avoid being over-influenced by potentially misleading factors, such as how busy pupils appear.

The ECT will learn how to:

**Avoid common assessment pitfalls, by:**

- 6b.** Drawing conclusions about what pupils have learned by looking at patterns of performance over a number of assessments (e.g. appreciating that assessments draw inferences about learning from performance).
- 6c.** Choosing, where possible, externally validated materials, used in controlled conditions when required to make summative assessments.

The following statements may have relevance to the session but are more specifically addressed in Week 1. Week 1 addresses formative and summative assessment, questioning and performance.

The ECT will learn that:

- 6.1** Effective assessment is critical to teaching because it provides teachers with information about pupils' understanding and needs.
- 6.3** Before using any assessment, teachers should be clear about the decision it will be used to support and be able to justify its use.

The ECT will learn how to:

**Avoid common assessment pitfalls, by:**

- 6a.** Planning formative assessment tasks linked to lesson objectives and thinking ahead about what would indicate understanding (e.g. by using hinge questions to pinpoint knowledge gaps).

## Introduction

This training session occurs near the beginning of Module 4. Through this module ECTs will consider the fundamental principles of formative and summative assessment, exploring what these look like in practice. The ECT will focus in particular on the importance of high-quality feedback, including marking, and the importance of efficient approaches that maximise the impact of assessment on pupils' learning. They will work with their mentor to extend their understanding and practice through a range of learning activities, with opportunities to consider research on assessment and use this to evaluate their own approaches to assessing and giving feedback to their pupils. This will lead to the practical application of theory to the ECT's practice, applying new and refining existing approaches in the classroom. There will be opportunities for both collaborative and individual planning, reflection and evaluation, through which they will further develop their practice.

## Research Summary for this session

**Assessment** is a broad term, covering a wide range of teaching and learning activity. 'Assessment of learning' (or summative assessment), used after a period of teaching/learning, aims to find out what pupils know or can do at a given point in time. 'Assessment for learning' (or formative assessment), used during a period of teaching/learning, aims to find out where pupils are now and where they need to go next, as well as to provide feedback on how to get there. Assessment may also be used to establish pupils' prior knowledge and understanding at the outset of a sequence of learning. With these different purposes come different methods of assessment. Assessment can add significantly to a teacher's workload, so it is important for ECTs to become familiar with their school's expectations and to learn efficient methods from colleagues.

Peer-assessment and self-assessment can be valuable tools that enable pupils to check their own progress against agreed success criteria. However, pupils first need to be trained in how to do this well, and the approaches work best alongside teacher assessment rather than as an alternative. These approaches are explored further in week 4 of this module.

**Formative assessment** (or assessment for learning) is assessment which is used to directly inform the teaching and learning process – i.e. when evidence gathered on pupils is used to make adaptations to teaching and learning. Dylan Wiliam describes

it in terms of how ‘teachers and learners use information about student achievement to make adjustments to the student’s learning that improve their achievement.’

To support pupil learning through effective formative assessment, ECTs could draw on five key strategies for embedding formative assessment, outlined by Dylan Wiliam:

- clarifying, understanding and sharing learning intentions (e.g. by sharing clear success criteria for pupils at the outset of learning activities)
- engineering effective classroom discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning (e.g. by regularly using questioning and other ways of gathering information on pupil learning throughout and across lessons - this could include: quizzes, observing pupils as they work independently or discuss ideas with peers, checking pupils’ work during lesson time to monitor their progress, structured class discussions)
- providing feedback that moves learners forward (e.g. by being explicit about what pupils should do next to improve their learning)
- activating students as learning resources for one another (e.g. by explicitly teaching strategies such as peer-assessment)
- activating students as owners of their own learning (e.g. by explicitly teaching pupils strategies to monitor and regulate their own learning)

**Summative assessment** sums up at a given time (for example, the end of a unit) where learners are in their learning. It is also referred to as ‘assessment of learning’, in contrast to ‘assessment for learning’. Summative assessments are often more useful and reliable when compared against an external benchmark and conducted in controlled conditions. This should improve the reliability of the information that the teacher gets from the assessment.

It can be helpful to schedule summative assessment a little before the end of the time available for teaching a given topic (e.g. in week 4 of a 5-week topic). This allows time (e.g. in week 5) for the teacher and their pupils to address any learning needs picked up in the assessment by revisiting content that pupils have learned less well.

To help them make effective summative assessments, ECTs could:

- use externally validated materials where possible, such as a previous national test paper and mark scheme

- if several classes in one year group are to take the same summative assessment
  - give all the pupils the same notice and chance to prepare, so that you can compare across groups more accurately
  - work with your colleagues to plan the assessment, minimising excessive workload for individuals

**Performance** is used to describe ‘what a pupil can do at a given moment.’ How well they do in a test, for example, can be described as their performance. **Externally validated materials** – for example, exams and standardised tests, are useful for determining a pupil’s current level of performance within a particular domain. However, there are disadvantages to the use of high-stakes tests, since a single point of assessment (performance) is, by definition, not a reliable measure of what a pupil has really learned. It is therefore more valid and reliable to draw conclusions about a pupil’s learning on how they have performed across a number of different assessments within a given time period.

**Patterns of performance** are important for all teachers who make inferences about learning from performance. Performance data can be analysed to show patterns and trends in individual and group performance over a number of assessments—this is important as learning is not the same as performance, so using multiple pieces of data about performance supports teachers to make more reliable inferences than a single data point alone. ECTs should be equipped to consider the different types of performance data used at present in their school, department/team, class, etc. and/or that which they could adopt to help them make reliable inferences about pupil learning.

### **The training will need to cover**

The focus here is on effective assessment and the ways that this informs lesson planning. Specifically, the session should engage ECTs with ECF statements 6b and 6c and the importance of looking at patterns of performance to inform conclusions about what pupils have learned.

### **Review 10 mins**

You want to gauge the breadth of understanding among the ECTs about assessment (formative and summative) and the purpose of assessment in this session. This will check learning from Week 1. The ECTs may have undertaken a preparatory activity

asking them to reflect on their next assessment opportunity and the specific purpose of this. You might offer time for discussion to inform facilitation of the next section.

### **Plan 35 mins**

You might design a short scenario relating to your context that demonstrates the ways in which common assessment pitfalls can be avoided. An example has been included below, but while you might choose to use this, references to the ECTs' school context will be useful.

Jake is an ECT teaching GCSE maths in a sixth form college. Every week, Jake sets an assessment based on the work from the previous week's learning. He records the results carefully. Each half term, Jake provides his students with an end-of-topic summative assessment.

Tanisha, a more experienced maths teacher in the department, is Jake's mentor. She wants to speak with Jake about how he can make the most effective use of his assessment activity to help him monitor and improve his pupils' learning.

Encourage the ECTs to

- think about what questions they might ask Jake to ascertain the effectiveness of his use of assessment—for example, does Jake make use of externally validated materials (e.g. past GCSE questions) in controlled conditions in the summative assessment?
- identify advice that Tanisha might give Jake
- consider the ways in which Jake might use the assessment data he currently collects; how he could look for and interpret patterns of performance; how this could inform planning of future sessions; whether Jake is making use of post-assessment questioning techniques, etc.

### **Theory to Practice 65 mins**

During the 60 minutes suggested for this section, aim to respond to the ideas that emerged in the Plan section. This section will need to engage the ECTs with the following:

- a) consideration of their school marking/assessment policies, specifically in relation to the ways that this supports different forms of assessment
- b) how assessment data is collected and recorded by each ECT, and what opportunities there are for patterns of performance to be considered by the ECT, team, school, etc.
- c) the potential issues of over-reliance on too few assessment sources
- d) identifying strategies used to promote effective assessment (e.g. externally validated materials, controlled conditions). You might include a discussion of the appropriate use of high-stakes testing alongside alternative assessment approaches
- e) identifying where the ECT might be able to access externally validated materials suitable for their pupils and how these can be used effectively
- f) ways to use assessment to support specific learners in their class and offer opportunities for pupils to experience success from their effective learning
- g) ways in which the ECT can be more purposeful in their assessment practices

Inform the ECTs that Module 4 will provide an opportunity to gain further detailed understanding of assessment which they will use to improve their practices.

### **Next Steps 10 mins**

Encourage the ECTs to capture their learning from the session. This could be done as a series of *I have learned that...* and *I have learned how to...* statements.