

Section C: Extending Formative Assessment

Unit 2: Purposes, principles and practice in building capacities

Overview

It is often stated that Assessment for Learning and A Curriculum for Excellence are closely linked. However, the nature of these links is not yet well defined and the role assessment can play in creating successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors has still to be explored in any depth.

The model of interaction between teachers and pupils based on the principles of participation, dialogue and engagement is set out in the Highland Council Learning and Teaching Reflection Framework. This unit uses that model to stimulate and sustain a more rigorous approach to the development of thinking as a practical way of addressing the individual capacities described in ACfE.

Reading

The research paper, “Assessment for Learning: exploring programme success” by Louise Hayward, Ernest Spencer and Mary Simpson offers an insight into the reasons for the success of the AifL programme. Section 6 of the paper is useful in suggesting a number of approaches likely to help teachers engage effectively in ACfE developments. The full paper is also included in this unit for those who like to read research in greater detail

Session 1 The purposes of the curriculum

Starting with the four purposes of the curriculum, this session looks at the implications of setting these purposes (and capacities) as a framework for ‘transforming’ the current subject-based (and assessed) curriculum into a revised curriculum which seeks to embody an overarching set of values, purposes and principles.

Activity 1: Purposes and capacities

Session 2 The principles of learning and teaching

In shifting the purpose of the curriculum from gaining subject-based knowledge to the acquisition of a broader range of understanding and skills, ACfE has placed considerable emphasis on the development of a range of personal capacities through day-to-day classroom activities. This session will provide participants with opportunities to look in some detail at changes in classroom approaches that may be needed to achieve this.

Activity 2: Exploring the principles

Session 3 The practice of assessment

Using our growing understanding of the theory and practice of AifL, this session explores how the principles of participation, dialogue, engagement and thinking can help deliver the purposes of the curriculum through both planning based on ACfE principles of curriculum design, and teaching and learning using approaches to classroom assessment that help pupils become more engaged in their own learning.

Activity 3: Planning and delivering