

# ART ASSESSMENT WORKING PAPER 3:

## APP - EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT

**Summary** *This working paper is one of set of working papers which explore issues related to assessment in art. This seeks to resolve issues identified in working papers 1 and 2 by introducing the principles of APP.*  
*Dan China*

*Appendix 1 is a description of 10 principles for assessment for learning. Appendix 2 is review of the types of evidence that may contribute to APP.*

---

### Introduction

Assessment is at the heart of an effective curriculum and is a fundamental part of good teaching and learning.

APP (Assessing Pupils' Progress) is a new approach to assessment developed by QCDA. APP not only provides a link to national standards, but also provides a well-rounded individual profile of each learners' achievements that highlights their particular strengths and areas for improvement. APP represents a structured approach to assessment in which teachers make periodic judgment's on pupils' progress using a wide range of evidence taken from a variety of classroom contexts.

APP is based on a number of key principles. Firstly, that a teacher's assessment of a pupil's progress is based on a collection of evidence and on not individual pieces of work. This evidence can be wide ranging and come from a variety of contexts. Secondly, that this 'periodic' assessment is only made when it's possible and useful to review progress over time. For a foundation subject this would typically be around twice a year when sufficient evidence of the pupil's progress has been accumulated and at a point when the review can provide useful feedback on the pupil's learning. Finally, that moderation with their colleagues and against the pupil standards files for their subject, results in teachers making more reliable assessment judgements. All of these principles underpin good assessment for learning practice and will ensure that pupils receive timely, clear and useful feedback which will help them improve.

### What are the advantages of using APP?

APP has a number of benefits:

- it reduces the need to use tests and specific assessment tasks to make assessment judgements and instead involves making use of evidence from the opportunities generated by planned teaching and learning
- the emphasis on using a wide range of evidence to assess pupils' achievement can lead to a broadening of the curriculum
- taking into account a far wider range of evidence gives a clearer and more accurate picture of pupils' achievements and progress
- it provides a common framework for teachers to share and discuss the evidence they have of pupils' progress, to build assessment expertise and develop confidence.
- it directly informs discussions with pupils, as well as future planning, teaching and learning
- it offers a secure basis for pupil tracking against national standards.

APP provides teachers with a valuable opportunity for professional development as it gives them effective tools to develop their assessment and teaching techniques. This can give pupils greater independence and choice in their work and a chance to become more engaged in the learning process.

It takes time to get used to the assessment tools and level-related criteria, but when APP is applied in the classroom, the benefits far outweigh the challenges.

---

## Getting started with APP

### Implementation and management

APP is most effective when its implementation is planned systematically across the whole school. Decisions about how to disengage from some of a school's existing assessment systems and replacing these with APP should really be made by senior managers, one of the risks of not doing this is that a school could end up with duplicate assessment systems and significantly more the work.

APP will provide better and more accurate assessment information about standards and progress than simply recording a 'level' number at frequent fixed intervals which may be unrelated to the proper work and assessment cycle in the different subjects. This practice of 'levelling' will be shallow and insecure, it is more effective to wait until there is sufficient evidence and pupils have reached a point when it is useful to review a pupil's progress. It will be important to avoid the trap of amassing and storing large amounts of pupil evidence – judgements should be based on the evidence that comes out naturally from routine teaching and learning. Good assessment for learning practice will also engage pupils in recognising, presenting and recording evidence for assessment.

### APP materials

QCDA will publish new standards files in June 2010. These will provide examples of pupils' work and progress together with an assessment commentary. These files will show how a profile can be built up of a pupil's progress in the key aspects of the subject. These different aspects are called Assessment Focuses and they present the evidence that can be used for assessment against the national curriculum. The *assessment focuses* in APP identify three main aspects of performance in each foundation subject. The standards files will indicate the range of assessment evidence and the different assessment practices that teachers and pupils can use to evaluate progress.

In each subject work will be done to publish criteria which will make the relationship of the AFs to the level statements and standards files clear. It is anticipated that this will be available in autumn 2010. However, as APP is not statutory schools may wish to develop their own assessment materials to support internal moderation and consistency with national standards. In essence this practice will be very similar to the tracking of the separate GCSE assessment objectives in Key Stage 4.

### The APP process

The APP approach is straightforward and consists of three main stages:

**Step 1: Gather evidence** (*over a period of time, generate evidence of pupils' attainment from day-to-day teaching and learning.*)

When making a periodic judgement, your APP assessments are more likely to be accurate and useful if you have a range of appropriate evidence from each pupil to review – this evidence might be written, oral or visual (for example photos, video or artefacts). It might be in teacher's observations of pupils' performance

or in records of peer or self-evaluation. Identifying assessment opportunities in your scheme of work will help to ensure that a broad range of evidence is likely to be available.

**Step 2: Review the evidence** (*an appropriate range*)

You need to review a variety of evidence before reaching a periodic judgement. You can use assessment focuses (AF) to identify the criteria that your pupils have met in each of the key aspects of the subject. If you use a separate assessment focuses sheet for each pupil you will establish a profile of learning for each of your pupils, and can track their progress in each AF over time.

**Step 3: Make a judgement** (*Using the subject assessment focuses and standards files*)

You can use the assessment focus to make reliable judgements about your pupils' attainment in different aspects (or assessment focuses) of your subject. If you wish to, you can then arrive at an overall subject level judgement, before fine-tuning it to 'high', 'secure' or 'low'.

It is inappropriate to make a periodic judgement based on insufficient evidence. If sufficient evidence is unavailable, it may be that the scheme of work needs to be adjusted in order to provide a fuller evidence base across the range of *assessment focuses* in the future.

Assessment will be improved where teachers spend some time reviewing the annotated evidence in the *standards files* with others in the department, school or local authority. This will help to ensure that the interpretation of the assessment criteria is consistent with that of other colleagues. This discussion and moderation will also support assessment for learning by modelling and enhancing the vocabulary and dialogue that teachers will have with pupils, and which pupils will have with each other.

---

## APP in art and design

The *assessment focuses* in APP identify three main aspects of performance in each foundation subject and organise the assessment criteria within them. The criteria support pupil progression in the key concepts and processes set out in the national curriculum programmes of study, and can be applied to a wide range of learning contexts.

The three *assessment focuses* for art and design are:

**AF1 Understanding art, craft and design**

AF1 is concerned with recognising how pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design as a way of engaging with ideas and conveying values and meanings. They use their understanding to develop their own views and express reasoned judgements. It is also concerned with recognising how pupils engage with artists, craftspeople and designers, their personalities and their work, using their knowledge of the range of contexts, times and cultures in which work was produced to inform their understanding. It thus relates to the key concepts of critical and cultural understanding in the national curriculum programme of study.

Through what they say, write, make and do pupils demonstrate their:

- ability to evaluate their own work, and that of others, taking account of both purpose and context.
- appreciation and critical understanding of the work of others through responses that are increasingly considered and informed

- understanding of the roles of artists, craftspeople and designers, sharing what they know about why and how art, craft and design is produced and the importance of personalities, cultures and purposes in this process

As pupils make progress, they demonstrate an increasing awareness of how they can use what they learn to inform their own explorations, investigations and designs (AF2) as well as their own outcomes through what they produce and make (AF3).

## **AF2 Exploring and investigating**

AF2 is concerned with how pupils develop their ability and understanding in engaging with ideas and issues, together with how they exploit the potential of materials, processes and techniques. It is also concerned with how pupils explore and investigate ideas, issues, materials and processes to help them develop their ideas and intentions. It recognises the importance of learning to experiment and take creative risks confidently and with an increasing sense of purpose and thus relates to the key concept of creativity in the national curriculum programme of study.

Through what they say, write, make and do pupils demonstrate that they can:

- explore and investigate a range of ideas and issues through their making
- experiment with ideas, materials and processes with an increasing sense of purpose
- identify what it is they want to do, designing and modelling imaginative proposals that are original in relation to their life experiences and of value to themselves and others.

As pupils make progress, they demonstrate increasing confidence and the ability to learn from what they see and understand about how others have worked (AF1). Their explorations will become increasingly purposeful. They will demonstrate an increasing recognition and understanding of when it is appropriate to explore and experiment openly, and of when they need more focused ways of working. They will apply what they learn to what they, say, write, make and do (AF3).

## **AF3 Creating art, craft and design**

AF3 is concerned with pupils' ability to experiment, make and create. They use their understanding of how others have worked and the outcomes of their enquiries and investigations using different media, techniques and processes to produce personal art works.

They will use and apply their developing understanding and technical skills to analyse and evaluate progress, making informed choices in relation to their ideas, processes and outcomes at all stages of their work. AF3 this relates to the key concept of competence in the national curriculum programme of study.

Through what they say, write, make and do pupils demonstrate that they can:

- analyse, design and make taking account of the qualities of materials and their own intentions. purposefully develop their practical skills and understanding of materials and techniques, seeking to improve and progress.
- create art, craft and design works that effectively realise their intentions and communicate their ideas and feelings.

As pupils make progress, they demonstrate an increasing confidence and ability to work independently and to take on a broader range of challenges. They will move from working confidently with familiar materials and processes to exploring the unfamiliar and unknown. They will be able to make effective connections between their own work and what they have learnt from, and about, others' artworks.

### **How to use these *assessment focuses***

Taken together, the *assessment focuses* encapsulate the key features of progress in art and design through the national curriculum attainment target in the programme of study. They underpin the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of art and design.

For each *assessment focus*, effective assessment should draw from a wide range of evidence including what pupils say, write make and do. The three *assessment focuses* are inter-related; learning that is recognised in one area will support progress in another.

Activity in art and design may begin with any aspect: with the pursuit of an idea, the investigation of a material or the study of an artist. Then, as work progresses, the activity will lead the pupil naturally into the other aspects.

Activity in art and design is holistic, but it can be helpful in assessing pupils to reflect on the *assessment focuses* separately. This ensures that assessment is always focused and specific and the APP model supports this approach.

It is essential that assessment evidence is drawn from what pupils make (products), what pupils think (say and write) and what pupils do (behaviour). Schools need to consider a range of manageable strategies that will support and capture each of these aspects.

Copyright © 2010 Dan China and NSEAD



National Society for Education in Art & Design  
3 Mason's Wharf  
Potley Lane  
Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 9FY  
United Kingdom

Tel +44 (0) 1225 810134  
Fax +44 (0) 1225 812730  
[www.nsead.org](http://www.nsead.org)

---

## Appendix 1

### The 10 principles of AFL

Assessment for learning should be part of effective planning of teaching and learning

1. A teacher's planning should provide opportunities for both learner and teacher to obtain and use information about progress towards learning goals. It also has to be flexible to respond to initial and emerging ideas and skills. Planning should include strategies to ensure that learners understand the goals they are pursuing and the criteria that will be applied in assessing their work. How learners will receive feedback, how they will take part in assessing their learning and how they will be helped to make further progress should also be planned.

*Assessment for learning should focus on how students learn.*

2. The process of learning has to be in the minds of both learner and teacher when assessment is planned and when the evidence is interpreted. Learners should become as aware of the 'how' of their learning as they are of the 'what'.

*Assessment for learning should be recognised as central to classroom practice.*

3. Much of what teachers and learners do in classrooms can be described as assessment. That is, tasks and questions prompt learners to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills. What learners say and do is then observed and interpreted, and judgements are made about how learning can be improved. These assessment processes are an essential part of everyday classroom practice and involve both teachers and learners in reflection, dialogue and decision making.

*Assessment for learning should be regarded as a key professional skill for teachers.*

4. Teachers require the professional knowledge and skills to: plan for assessment; observe learning; analyse and interpret evidence of learning; give feedback to learners and support learners in self-assessment. Teachers should be supported in developing these skills through initial and continuing professional development.

*Assessment for learning should be sensitive and constructive because any assessment has an emotional impact.*

5. Teachers should be aware of the impact that comments, marks and grades can have on learners' confidence and enthusiasm and should be as constructive as possible in the feedback that they give. Comments that focus on the work rather than the person are more constructive for both learning and motivation.

*Assessment for learning should take account of the importance of learner motivation.*

6. Assessment that encourages learning fosters motivation by emphasising progress and achievement rather than failure. Comparison with others who have been more successful is unlikely to motivate learners. It can also lead to their withdrawing from the learning process in areas where they have been made to feel they are 'no good'. Motivation can be preserved and enhanced by assessment methods which protect the learner's autonomy, provide some choice and constructive feedback, and create opportunity for self-direction.

*Assessment for learning should promote commitment to learning goals and a shared understanding of the criteria by which they are assessed.*

7. For effective learning to take place learners need to understand what it is they are trying to achieve - and want to achieve it. Understanding and commitment follows when learners have some part in deciding goals and identifying criteria for assessing progress. Communicating assessment criteria involves discussing them with learners using terms that they can understand, providing examples of how the criteria can be met in practice and engaging learners in peer and self-assessment.

*Learners should receive constructive guidance about how to improve.*

8. Learners need information and guidance in order to plan the next steps in their learning. Teachers should:
  - pinpoint the learner's strengths and advise on how to develop them
  - be clear and constructive about any weaknesses and how they might be addressed
  - provide opportunities for learners to improve upon their work.

*Assessment for learning develops learners' capacity for self-assessment so that they can become reflective and self-managing*

9. Independent learners have the ability to seek out and gain new skills, new knowledge and new understandings. They are able to engage in self-reflection and to identify the next steps in their learning. Teachers should equip learners with the desire and the capacity to take charge of their learning through developing the skills of self-assessment.

*Assessment for learning should recognise the full range of achievements of all learners.*

10. Assessment for learning should be used to enhance all learners' opportunities to learn in all areas of educational activity. It should enable all learners to achieve their best and to have their efforts recognised.

## Appendix 2

### The nature of evidence

In the table below QCDA guidance about the nature of evidence is interpreted to reflect practice in art. APP suggests that through their day-to-day interactions, observations and ongoing assessment teachers see evidence of what pupils understand and can do. APP is most effective when it draws on a broad range of evidence that shows what pupils can do independently. In art evidence comes from three sources. What the pupils make (outcomes), what they do (observed behaviour) and what they know (ie write or say).

	<b>Guidance from QCDA website</b>	<b>In Art this could be:</b>
1	extended or shorter focused pieces of writing in a variety of different forms for a range of purposes -	<i>Evidence from the final piece...</i> Outcomes and products. Realised and considered pieces of art craft or design.
2	information from different curriculum areas	<i>Evidence from other curriculum areas..</i> .Information from different curriculum areas could include cultural understanding from history, geography, English or other arts subjects. Understanding and skills related to design may come from technology and science.
3	text annotation or visual organisers such as thought mapping, storyboards or timelines	<i>Evidence from sketchbooks...</i> Work in sketchbooks and other similar records of process and thinking.
4	oral work such as pupil presentations to the class, contributions to class discussions, drama activities or discussions with teachers	<i>Evidence from ongoing discussions with the teacher...</i> <i>Evidence from contributions to group or class discussions...</i> One to one discussions with teachers are the most important source of evidence about pupil progress in art. Other sources will include contributions to group work or discussions and contributions to plenary sessions.
5	observing pupils' behaviour and interactions	<i>Evidence from teacher observations...</i> Teacher observations of pupils behaviour and interactions will include observations of technical competence and understanding of materials and processes. It will also include observations of group work and peer assessment.
6	pupils' self-assessment.	<i>Evidence of the pupil's self assessment in(sketchbooks, discussion etc.)...</i> Evidence of self assessment will be found in some of the above eg.one to one discussions about work in progress with teachers, annotate sketch books, observed peer assessment activities.
7	? (it is not a definitive list)	<i>Evidence...</i>