

Planned Assessment Opportunities - Primary

By Claire Sullivan

Assessment is an essential part of every lesson. It gives you information about your pupil's levels of understanding and needs and helps you to know how to respond and where to take the learning next. When I first started teaching, I probably didn't assess as regularly throughout the lesson as I would do now. Assessment would mainly take the form of questioning and then reviewing of pupil work after the lesson. Now it is something that is constantly ongoing, but there are some more natural places to pause during a lesson and plan some intentional assessment opportunities.

A key opportunity for assessment is the beginning of the lesson, and I often use this time to activate prior learning from either the day before, as a recap, or a week or so ago, as more of a spaced /retrieval practice. Depending on how recently we learnt the topic, I often like to give a partially completed example which the pupils then complete, or a 'find the error' example where they find my mistake. I find these really help focus pupil thinking back to the topic knowledge and specifically the process and steps that they need to implement in order to solve the problem. An example from literacy might be something like this:

Correct Mr Sullivan's grammar mistakes:

Walking through the viillage , sarah spotted some yellow ducklings on there own in the pond sarah new that they must only be days old and that mabye their mother had flown of to find some food for them

I often put common misconceptions or mistakes pupils usually make. Spelling of the word 'maybe' as 'mabye', and missing capital letter of proper nouns is really common.

Another opportunity to plan in some purposeful assessment is to consciously check for misconceptions forming in pupil knowledge. I have been teaching for over 10 years now, so I am more familiar with the types of misconceptions that can happen in each subject, but at the start of my career I found it really valuable to chat with experienced colleagues if I ever felt I wasn't sure what misconceptions could arise. I like to plan to check for potential misconceptions at two points in the lesson:

1. As I am about to set pupils to their independent and guided task and
2. During the independent/ guided task – I will move around the room and look for misconceptions to correct instantly. This may involve me stopping the whole class if I spot a misconception forming in several pupils' work.

I don't do this for every lesson, but where I know there is a good chance of a common misconception arising, I will give the class a question to answer which contains that misconception. It is only a quick check, but it helps me get a sense of whether the class is ready to try the independent work or which pupils would benefit from more support.

An example of this would be:

Which sentence contains the correctly place apostrophe? A, B or C?

A – The pupils' in the class were ready to learn.

B – The pupils in the class were ready to learn.

C – The pupil's in the class were ready to learn.

How do you know?

I find it helpful to anticipate potential misconception and be conscious and explicit about them when I teach.