

Heathrow Aviation Engineering UTC Assessment Policy

Introduction

"Marking is usually conscientious but often fails to offer guidance on how work can be improved. In a significant minority of cases, marking reinforces under-achievement and low expectation by being too generous or unfocused. Information about student performance received by the teacher is insufficiently used to inform subsequent work." (OFSTED general report on secondary schools - 1996)

Much research has been undertaken over the last 19 years on the quality of assessment. There is a wealth of research evidence that the everyday practice of assessment in classrooms is beset with problems and shortcomings. Heathrow Aviation Engineering University Technical College (UTC) we are basing our assessment policy on the extensive recent research, which has been proven to improve student performance.

Aims

- To identify student's successes against the Learning Objective
- To highlight the student's next learning step/target
- To promote student understanding of the marking process
- To involve students in the assessment process
- To value students' work through meaningful and consistent dialogue
- To identify student's achievements against statutory assessments
- To provide on-going evaluation and opportunities to improve work.

Marking/assessment is a developmental process. The way in which we assess students' work is dependent upon the learning objective and must take account of the student's needs and abilities.

Formative Assessment

To be formative, assessment must include a recipe for future action. Classroom assessment should include:

- Rich questioning
- Feedback to support learners
- Sharing criteria with learners
- Peer and self-assessment

"Feedback to any student should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve, and should avoid comparisons with other students." (Extracts from "Inside the Black Box" by Paul Black & Dylan Wiliam)

There is research, which strongly suggests that giving marks alone, or marks and comments, leads to no improvement in attainment. When work is formatively assessed then comments alone should be given.

Summative Assessment

Summative data that supports formative uses is an essential part of the process. Teachers need to know about their students' progress and difficulties with learning so that they can adapt their work to meet their needs which are often unpredictable and which vary from one student to another.

Teachers can find out what they need in a variety of ways: from observation and discussion in the classroom, and from written work of students whether done as Independent Learning or in class.

Summative data will allow teachers to understand where the students are in their learning and allow teachers to intervene if a student's performance indicates underachievement.

Teachers will enter an assessment for each student to the UTC Management Information System (MIS) every half term. The assessment recorded will be current and relevant grade to the course of study.

Teachers will record written comments, including targets onto the MIS annually at the time dictated by the UTC Calendar.

The purpose of the above system is assuring the quality of learning while it is happening rather than when it has finished and enables Subject Teachers, Directors and Senior Leadership Team Members to better monitor the progress of all students. Quality assurance, as opposed to quality control, will allow us to best adapt to the learning needs of students at the earliest possible stage.

In Summary

Formative assessment can help all students; it gives them both a clear understanding of what requires improvement and achievable targets for putting it right.

The choice of tasks for class and Independent Learning is important. Tasks have to be justified in terms of the learning aims that they serve, as they can only work well if opportunities for students to communicate their evolving understanding are built into the planning. Discussion, observation of activities, marking of written work, can all be used to provide these opportunities. It is then important to look at, or listen carefully to the talk, the writing, actions through which students develop and display their understanding.

"Opportunities for students to express their understanding should be designed into any piece of teaching, for this will initiate the interaction whereby formative assessment aids learning." (Extracts from "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment" by Paul Black & Dylan Wiliam)

Expectation of all Class Teachers

Each class teacher's assessments of students should be broken into 3 core parts, each of which needs to be planned for and appear in lessons:

Assessment of learning: These include the summative assessment activities such as end of unit tests, past exam papers, outcomes of essays or activities. *Assessment of learning gauges where students are in their learning and which skills have been mastered or not. This summative assessment would be used in the six-weekly progress check.*

Assessment for learning: These include the formative assessment activities such as: comments given to improve oral presentations or essays, filling gaps in knowledge or skills gaps gauged from summative activities, individual and group feedback in lessons, peer and self-assessment activities. Assessment for learning spells out students' strengths and gives personal and pertinent advice in order that students may continue to make progress. Lesson sequencing and planning must allow students to revisit skills, which they have applied to an activity to demonstrate the improvements, which they have made.

Assessment as learning: This includes reflecting on learning through plenaries and individual discussions. Teachers and students help to set their own learning targets and students use self and peer assessment.

Through this students become more aware of:

- What they learn
- How they learn
- What helps them learn

Assessment as learning is about reflecting on evidence of learning. This is part of the cycle of assessment where students and employees set learning goals, share learning intentions and success criteria and evaluate their learning through dialogue and self and peer assessment.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Teachers must:

- Share success criteria for learning
- Ensure that clear explicit objectives are understood by the class
- Plan opportunities for the different assessment types
- Ensure that rich questioning is used to develop learning
- Feedback targets both written and orally
- Ensure that assessment is visible through exposition of the lesson
- Model answers to scaffold student understanding
- Build in opportunities for peer and self-assessment
- Mark students' work so that skills are clearly identified and use this information for reports

Subject leaders:

As teachers (above) plus ensure that:

- All schemes of work have built in objectives and outcomes
- Assessment for learning is structured and a feature of every lesson
- Assessment is visible in all observed lessons
- Assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment as learning is understood by all members of the team.
- All members of the team regularly discuss / share / moderate / and monitor assessment of all types within the team.

Tutors are informed of particular patterns/issues with underachieving students so that appropriate intervention strategies are put in place. Subject Leaders would monitor the progress of intervention plans via line management meetings and more formally through Performance Management reviews.

The Board of Governors and Principal will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the UTC's Assessment Policy.

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