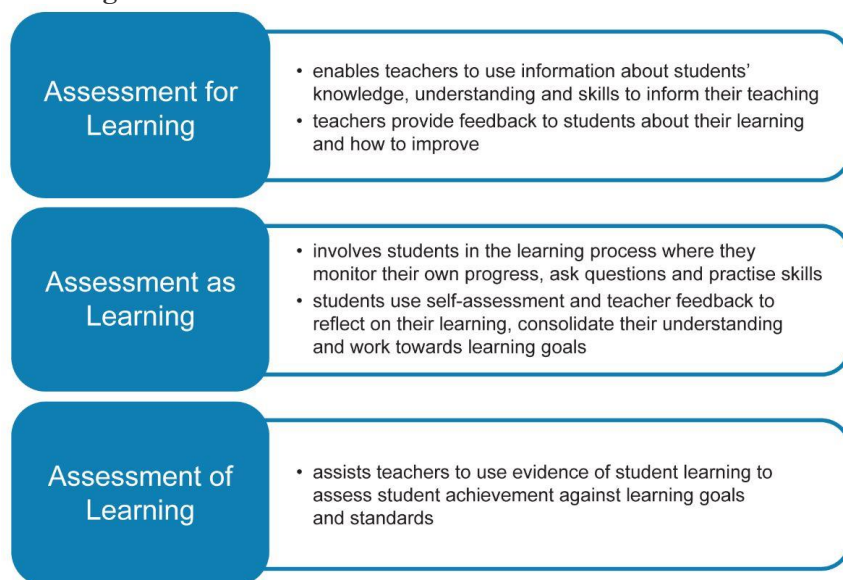


JENNY WILLIAMS guides us through the elements of wise assessment practice for all teachers K-10 ...

### Assessing Assessment K-10



*NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum, English K-10, page 181.*

This might sound sad but I love the assessment section of our new syllabus documents! The graphic in each of the syllabuses is easy to read and understand and clearly draws our attention to three critical aspects of assessment.

Assessment for learning and assessment of learning we have known about for a long time and assessment as learning helps us connect the learner to the learning process and addresses those aspects of learning that are so significant for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

However let me share a couple of overheard scenarios that have made me pause these last few weeks:

### Scenario 1:

A teacher mentor working with a beginning teacher on a stage three class asked about assessment for learning completed at the start of the year. The beginning teacher handed over a class list with a number beside each student's name. All the students have been 'tested' on two standardised tests, by someone else, not the class teacher and the two numbers were added together in order to rank the class.

I admit that I struggled with statistics at university but even I am questioning the validity of using two very old, unrelated standardised tests and adding the numbers together. I am sure that is statistically invalid and I am not even asking about copyright issues or the usefulness of the assessment done by someone other than the class teacher.



## Scenario 2:

A group of teachers from stage two met with their supervisor to look at a baseline piece of writing every student had completed at the beginning of the year. The teachers had used a rubric, downloaded from somewhere and assessed each student against the rubric. The rubric took an entire A4 page and had five grades and seven criteria. The criteria had not been given to students before the task. The supervisor wondered what the wording meant that differentiated between a 4 or a 5 on one criteria. The teachers remarked that they didn't understand the difference ... but they had all used it to assess their classes.

I am sure these are isolated incidents that are not typical of most schools but it has led me to think that now might be a good time to take an audit of the assessment tools used across a school. The BOSTES Advice on Assessment is an easy read and provides a great guide against which to judge the usefulness of our assessment tools. Start with a simple checklist drawn from the BOSTES advice. Here is an example.

<b>1. Checklist for assessment tasks</b>	
Part of whole school approach	
Reflects purpose:	
Assessment for learning	
Assessment as learning	
Assessment of Learning	
Links to syllabus outcomes that have been taught	
Includes criteria so students understand what is being assessed	
Enables all students to demonstrate learning and is fair	
Time efficient, manageable and informs future teaching	
Values teacher judgement	

Engaging in a whole school discussion around what assessment should look like is a worthwhile starting place. Next, designing assessments to address other aspects of assessment can become the challenge.

<b>2. Checklist for assessment tasks</b>	
Promotes deep understanding of what has been taught	
Engages the learner	
Provides a measure of choice and openness	
Includes opportunities for teacher/peer feedback	
Includes student reflection on learning	
Addresses a range of outcomes in one task	
Provides an opportunity for critical thinking activities	
Allows for connections to be made between the concepts students have learnt and real life	



I am positive that worthwhile discussion will result from this exercise at a grade, stage and whole school level. Such discussion will ensure a deeper understanding of effective assessment across a whole school.

***References:***

*BOSTES, English Years K–10: Support materials on Programming*

*BOSTES, English Years K–10, Advice on Assessment*

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