

Approaches to recording and recording in post primary schools in ireland



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The main goal of teachers today is to ensure that all their students leave with the ability to think and especially their ability to critically think, nevertheless alongside all learning, the need for assessment will always follow. The need for assessment has been argued amongst educators for years and will most likely to continue for many more years. Regardless of your view, assessment is a useful tool, from the grades achieved, a teacher can classify their ability, provide feedback and structure teaching for their student's future needs. (Tosuncuoglu, 2018). So, until the day that a more efficient means of assessment is created, we do our best within the constraints of the present system.

The question asserts that the records collected will need to represent a clear picture of each student's achievements and future needs. There are several means of achieving this goal from the introduction of the education passport to ease the transfer from primary education to post primary to the use of the teacher's journal to record day to day information. Within this text I will be discussing the validity of these tools and the implications that will affect myself in the future.

Reporting and recording prior to the Junior Cycle reform, when the phased introduction in 2012 began, was based solely on the end of semester and end of year examinations was without any policy guidelines. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) noted that the focus was on the assessment and this was done without any support, guidance or national policy in schools (NCCA, 2005). It also found an assessment practice that was devised mainly by the work of the teachers and their desire for improvement despite the lack of support. The Primary School Curriculum stressed the need

<https://assignbuster.com/approaches-to-recording-and-recording-in-post-primary-schools-in-ireland/>

for assessment, stating “ through assessment the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term needs of the child and plans future work according” (Government of Ireland, 1999a, p. 17), this needs be carried through to post primary level. The NCCA report (2003, p. 24) concluded that the examinations had to change and that the change needed to completely reform the students school experience and the way in which they were assessed, so began the Junior Cycle reform and included in this reform was the guidelines for assessment and reporting. Essentially, proper guidelines for teachers is needed in respect of assessment and enable a means of providing an overall view of the student’s progression throughout their schooling and is available to all their educators.

In 2014, The Education Passport was introduced (NCCA, Education Passport, n. d.) and the premise being, when the student moves from primary to post primary, their passport should contain a complete record of their time in primary education and is designed to ease the transfer from the primary sector to the post primary sector. The passport also includes a section for the parents to fill out which will allows the parent an opportunity to give an insight into the student which is designed to complement the academic information contained within it.

This insight is also included in the Framework of The Junior Cycle (2015), which states that reporting at junior cycle aims to include both the personal and educational progress of the student. It should support and produce ongoing learning that is manageable, accessible and of benefit to the school, student and parents/guardians. NCCA (2017) listed specific means of

ongoing reporting, which included a variety of ways such as informal oral
<https://assignbuster.com/approaches-to-recording-and-recording-in-post-primary-schools-in-ireland/>

and written feedback, parent teacher meetings, staff meetings, discussions with teachers/form year heads, end of topic/term/year reports. Although the methods listed here have been used in the past they have also included further means of reporting which go beyond just academic attainment. There are eight of these guiding principles set out in the NCCA's (2017 & 2018) booklets. Encourage authentic engagement with parents, provide opportunities for students through feedback to reflect on their learning, value the professional judgements of teachers, use the language of learning to provide effective feedback, be manageable and not take time away from learning and teaching, clearly communicate students' progress in learning, provide information on a broad range of achievement and be sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students and take an inclusive approach. These further reported practices are a step away from the summative Assessment of Learning and a simple end of year result towards a more encompassing perspective of the student's attainments through the use of formative Assessment for Learning.

Although summative assessment is still used widely employed by teachers to determine the level of understanding and achievement at the end of a topic or year, it only supplies a feed out system instead of a feedback one (Knight, 2002). Whereas formative assessment is not a test but process that is carefully planned (Popham, 1998). It is built on the formation of a close relationship between the teacher and the student, with a key characteristic that the assessment information is used by the teacher and the student together (Black, 1993). Stiggin's (2006) study has linked some constructs concerning 'classroom efficacy' and 'uncontrollable attributions' which

could in theory be as a result of formative assessment practice but the evidence didn't show how the variables were directly connected. Whilst Bennet (2011) found that " research does not appear to be as unequivocally supportive of formative assessment practice as it is sometimes made to sound." Bennett also concluded that is an area that needs further research. Gitomer and Duschl (2007), concluded that " assessment components can be considered internally coherent when they are mutually supportive" and that " formative and summative assessments need to be aligned with one another." In essence a balance between summative testing, which routinely advances learning by its nature and formative assessments, which add to the teachers overall view of student's attainments needs to be achieved.

To help achieve this overall view, the framework for the Junior Cycle (2015) further sets out to link classroom and other assessments which will conclude in the awarding of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). This award intends to give parents/guardians a more expansive image of their child's schooling during the three years of the junior cycle. Reporting within the three years will include the schools usual parent/teacher meetings and student/teacher feedback and formal annual reports for the first two years. The NCCA (2018) has devised a national approach for reporting and templates that not only enables the teacher to provide her view on the student's progress, it includes a template for both the student and the parents/guardian to complete. This provides a unique view to how the student feels about their own progress within the class, allowing the student to provide information on where they feel they may be excelling or struggling. Hattie (2009) found that teaching students how to self-assess by

supplying the student with feedback is an effective means of bridging the achievement gap. A selection of schools worked with the NCCA, implementing some of the new approaches, they stressed that discussion, engagement and professional learning for staff will be fundamental for the success of the new guidelines. Students and parents will be need to be advised of the new structure and the greater roles they will need to fulfil within the changes (NCCA 2018).

The teacher's journal is another tool used by teacher to compile student information on a day to day basis. The journal is used to record assessment scores, attendance, behaviour and work well done or not done at all.

Alongside the journal is an online system VShare, this is an online tool, which allows schools to record information similar to the journal but unlike the journal, it is able to provide a class overview, a year overview or the whole school's overview of variables such as attendance, assessment and/or behaviour. The results collated from the use of VShare could then be used to assist the NCCA in their nationwide plan of reporting, with very little effort on behalf of each respective school. The Department of Education will be updating the current web service to allow for the synchronisation of Junior Cycle Assessment data, also in line with the nationwide plan of reporting.

There are a lot of changes happening within the realm of education assessment record keeping, from how we collect those results, to the kind of results we are expected to collect. From an initial glance the implications for teachers appears to be a huge leap in the amount of data needed to be recorded. Teachers already have a significant workload and is this just

adding to it? In some respects yes, the work load will increase but I suspect <https://assignbuster.com/approaches-to-recording-and-recording-in-post-primary-schools-in-ireland/>

this will only occur during the implementation of these changes. However when you delve deeper into what is expected, most teachers will find that the newly required data is something they have always collected just never formally reported it. It is the information they use when attending parent/teacher meetings or staff meetings when they analyse their personally collected information on each student.

The benefits of this dual approach of both the summative and formative assessment should provide both the student and the teacher a more encompassing and informative image of the levels of work attained throughout the year. It also allows the teacher a more flexible role in assessment and reporting. Another hurdle the teacher will need to avoid will be ensuring that recording of the collected information be manageable and not time consuming in nature and thereby take time away from actual teaching.

Most importantly, teachers will need to ensure that the burden of these changes does not land solely on their shoulders, it will need to be team exercise between the teachers, the parents, the year heads, the principals, the school management, the Dept of Education and Science (DES), the NCCA, the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) and the State Examination Commission (SEC).

References

- Bennett, R. E. (2011). Formative assessment: A critical review. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice* . 18(1), 5-25.
- Black, P. J. (1993). *Formative and summative assessment by teachers* .

- Department of Education and Skills. (2012). *A framework for Junior Cycle*. Available at: <https://www.ncca.ie/media/3249/framework-for-junior-cycle-2015-en.pdf>
- Gitomer, D. H. and Duschl, R. A. 2007. “Establishing multilevel coherence in assessment”. In Evidence and decision making. The 106th yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, Edited by: Moss, P. A. 288–20.
- Government of Ireland (1999a). *Primary School Curriculum Introduction*. (Dublin, The Stationery Office)
- Hattie, J. (2012). Visible learning for teachers: *Maximizing impact on learning*. Routledge.
- Knight, P. T. (2002). Summative Assessment in Higher Education: Practices in disarray. *Studies in Higher Education*, 27 (3), 275-286. doi: 10.1080/03075070220000662
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2005). *Standardized testing in Irish primary schools*. (Dublin, NCCA). Available at: <https://www.ncca.ie/media/1354/standardised-testing.pdf>
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2003). *Report on the consultative process*. (Dublin, NCCA). Available at: https://www.ncca.ie/media/1814/ncca_annual_report_2003.pdf
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2018). *Reporting guidelines*. Dublin: NCCA. Available at: https://www.ncca.ie/media/3467/reporting_guidelines.pdf
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2017). *Ongoing reporting for effective teaching and learning*. Dublin: NCCA. Available at: <https://www.ncca.ie/media/3465/reporting-booklet-1.pdf>

- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (n. d.). *Reporting and transfer, Education passport* . Available at: <https://www.ncca.ie/en/primary/reporting-and-transfer/education-passport>
- Stiggins, R. 2006. Assessment for learning: A key to motivation and achievement. *Edge*, 2(2): 3–19.
- Tosuncuoglu, I. (2018). Importance of Assessment in ELT. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 6(9), 163–167.