

## Assessment and Review Pedagogy

### Assessment

'Assessment' is an activity that is aimed at gauging a child or group of children's understanding. It is part of our commitment that children should know more and remember more and that learning is evidenced by a change in long-term memory.

Assessment is integral to all parts of school life, in a constant dialogue between teaching staff and child to consider how they are grasping new knowledge and mastering new skills. Some of the research that underlies our thinking includes Black and Wiliam (1998), Clarke (2008) and Sherrington (2019).

### Validity and Reliability

These assessment activities are carefully considered to ensure they are as valid and reliable as possible.

#### Assessment Validity

An assessment's validity is an evaluation of the decisions and inferences made on the basis of an assessment result: how well the conclusions we make and actions we take as a result of the assessment activity are well founded. Questions that teaching staff ask themselves when designing an assessment can include:

- "Do the tasks match the learning intentions we are interested in?"
- Does the task cover a wide enough range of content?
- Are there enough items or tasks to cover the scope of what is being assessed?
- Do the tasks require use of the desired skills and reasoning processes?
- Is there an emphasis on deep, rather than surface knowledge?
- Are the directions for the assessment clear?
- Are the questions unambiguous?
- Are the time limits sufficient?
- Do the tasks avoid favouring groups of students more likely to have useful background knowledge?
- Is the language used suitable?
- Are the reading demands fair?" (Darr 2005, p. 55)

#### Assessment reliability

Assessment reliability is the consistency of results gained from an assessment: would similar results have occurred if the assessment taken place on a different time or day? Would the similar results have taken place if other tasks have been chosen for the assessment? Are results consistent across different markers? The higher the consistency, the more reliable the assessment. For our teaching staff, reliability means "Does this assessment provide me with enough information to make judgement of each student's level of accomplishment with regard to their learning?" (Smith 2003, cited in Darr 2005a)- are there enough sources of information to come to that judgement?

Davies (2000) suggests different sources of assessment evidence as the basis of any decision making, which can be triangulated to make the results more reliable.



### Types of Assessment

Assessment occurs within every lesson, but can be roughly grouped into two main groups: **within a lesson** and **between lessons or groups of lessons**.

#### Assessment within a lesson

Teaching staff use assessment within every lesson to see which children need additional support or challenge, or whether the lesson plan needs adjusting to counter misconceptions. These assessment opportunities are carefully planned by teaching staff. They can include activities such as:

- Open-ended teacher questioning (including statement, agree/disagree, odd one out, true/false, 'I wonder...' (Clarke 2008)).
- Dimensions of Depth (including 'What's the Question?' 'What's wrong with this?' 'Show me!' 'Pattern seeking' (Ark Curriculum 2021).
- 'Apply' Tasks: independent tasks designed to be more challenging and apply knowledge and skills learned in the lesson.
- Discussion/Partner Discussions
- 'Always, sometimes, never' tasks
- Board games
- Mastering a skill through play or exploration

Between lessons or groups of lessons

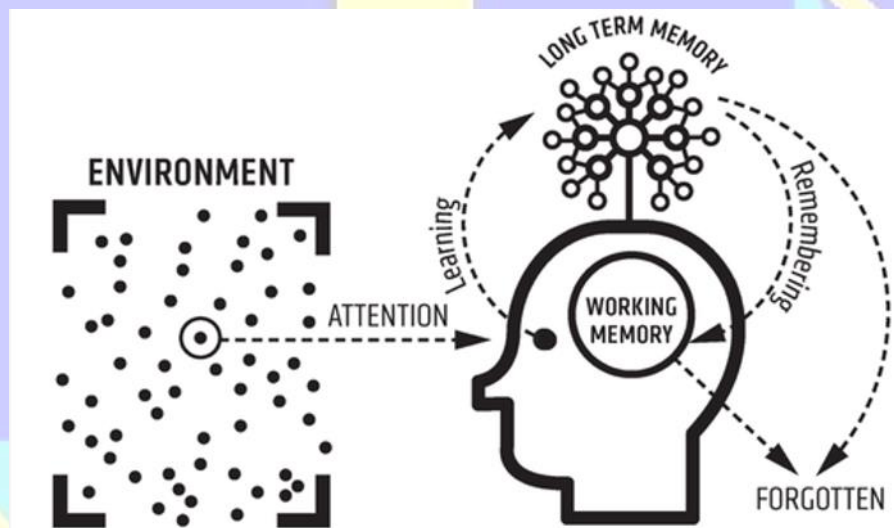
Teaching staff also plan assessment activities between lessons or at the end of a unit of study. These are designed to understand what children know and remember on a longer-term basis. As these are less frequent assessments, teaching staff are conscious these assessment activities need to be more reliable and have higher validity than activities that occur within a lesson. These activities can include:

- Formal testing, including SATs paper and phonics assessments
- Open-ended problem solving or investigation
- A scenario/task that adopts a role
- Independent tasks/independent write (called a PiP, Put into Practise in English lessons)
- Peer/self-assessment
- Evaluating a piece of work against a brief or success criteria
- A quiz or lesson starter
- Tasks designed to help children to make links and compare different areas of learning

## Review

### How 'Learning' Happens

To help to understand how children learn, we use Caviglioli's (2019) image, which explores how information enters our working through our environment. Working memory is rather limited and can only take in a fixed amount of information at one time. This information is processed and then stored in long-term memory, which can then be retrieved into working memory as required.



*(From Sherrington (2019), p. 11)*

Information is organised into schema- linked or connected information. New information typically links to an existing schema- this means that it is essential to link new information to a child's prior knowledge. As schema become more complex and interconnected, they can be recalled more readily and fluently (Sherrington 2019). At Emmaus, these ideas have informed how we design our curriculum and assessment systems: we have ensured that units of study inter-link and build on one another. We have looked for opportunities to build systems of knowledge within and between subject disciplines, rather than isolated units of study.

### Helping children to know more and remember more

Assessment, on both a daily and less frequent basis, informs teaching staff about what children understood and their level of fluency. We recognise that children need to review what they have learned, to help prevent children from forgetting this information, to build fluency in recalling information and to build their long-term memory (Sherrington 2019).

To help children to develop their long-term memory, we regularly review prior knowledge. This takes place on a daily or lesson-by-lesson basis or on a less frequent basis. We use assessments to identify what content children can remember and what key learning needs revisiting in the future.

Some examples of review activities can include:

- Revisiting 'Big Questions' within a unit of study
- 'Cops and Robbers': children include as much they can remember about a subject and then have the opportunity to 'steal' other information from their peers.
- 'Label It': children label a diagram to review key vocabulary and processes
- 'Retrieval Pyramid': a series of retrieval questions that are ranked by challenge (Jones 2021).

### Our Assessment and Review Calendars

Our Assessment and Review Calendars give teaching staff a structure of assessment across the year. This ensures assessment activities are meaningful and manageable. We ensure that we assess children's understanding in different ways (please see the key on the calendar document), to ensure the conclusions we draw from our assessments are both as reliable and valid as possible. Once these assessments have been completed, review activities are used during the following half-term to address misconceptions or areas of development that have arisen from the assessments. This means that the exact content of the review activities cannot be planned before the assessments have taken place, yet staff have considered the types of activities that may be helpful in addressing these gaps.

### Learning Review Meetings

Three times a year, teaching staff meet as a phase to conduct Learning Review Meetings. These consider all subjects in our curriculum and identify areas of strength and areas of development. Staff discuss what they have concluded from their assessment and review activities- 'What changes could they make to their lessons to help children learn?' 'Is there a particular concept that children are struggling to grasp?' 'How could teaching staff approach the content differently?' This feeds into future planning and professional development, continually improving our curriculum and adapting it to the needs of our children.

For more information, please read:

**Ark Curriculum** 2021 *Mathematics Mastery* <https://www.arkcurriculumplus.org.uk/> Accessed 01.11.2021

**Black P and Wiliam D** 1998 Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment; *Phi Delta Kappan* Vol. 80 No. 2 pp. 139-48



**Caviglioli O** 2019 Diagram of how memory works; **Sherrington T** 2019 *Rosenshine's Principles in Action* John Catt Educational Woodbridge

**Clarke S** 2008 *Active Learning through Formative Assessment* Hodder Education London

**Darr C** 2005 A hitchhiker's guide to validity; *SET* No. 2 pp. 55-6

**Darr C** 2005a A hitchhiker's guide to reliability; *SET* No. 3 pp. 59-60

**Davies A** 2000 *Making classroom assessment work* Connections Publishing, Courtenay BC

**Jones K** 2021 *Retrieval Practice: Resource Guide* John Catt Educational Woodbridge

**Sherrington T** 2019 *Rosenshine's Principles in Action* John Catt Educational Woodbridge

