

Essential Guides for **EARLY CAREER TEACHERS**

Assessment

Essential Guides for Early Career Teachers

The *Essential Guides for Early Career Teachers* provide accessible, carefully researched, quick-reads for early career teachers, covering the key topics you will encounter during your training year and first two years of teaching. They complement and are fully in line with the new Early Career Framework and are intended to assist on-going professional development by bringing together current information and thinking on each area in one convenient place. The texts are edited by Emma Hollis, Executive Director of NASBTT (the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers), who brings a wealth of experience, expertise and knowledge to the series.

There are three books in the series so far but look out for more as the series develops.

Essential Guides for Early Career Teachers: Assessment

Alys Finch

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Assessment

Alys Finch
Series editor: **Emma Hollis**



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Meet the series editor



Emma Hollis

I am Executive Director of NASBTT (the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers) and my absolute passion is teacher education. After gaining a first-class degree in psychology I trained as a primary teacher, and soon became head of Initial Teacher Training for a SCITT provider. I am dedicated to ensuring teachers are given access to high-quality professional development at the early stages of and throughout their careers.

Meet the author



Alys Finch

I am the senior education lead for an educational trust in the Midlands. Prior to that, I was an education consultant, predominantly working with school-based teacher training providers to support excellent training for teachers and their mentors to maximise their impact on pupils. Drawing on over 15 years of teaching experience, including leading on curriculum, assessment and training at middle and senior leader levels (in schools, and in a range of local and national Initial Teacher Training

contexts), I know that practical but critically engaged approaches to assessment lie at the heart of enabling and accelerating all learners' progress. Perhaps as a coffee-break read or as part of your staff/CPD meetings, I hope that a brief exploration of the ideas and approaches in this book will provide some practical ways forward for you and your pupils. You can dip and in out of this book: see where ten minutes of reading can take you – and your students!

Foreword

As a passionate advocate of high-quality teacher education and continuing professional development, it has always been a source of frustration for me that beyond the ITT year, access to high-quality, structured on-going professional development has been something of a lottery for teachers. Access and support have been patchy, with some schools and local authorities offering fantastic opportunities for teachers throughout their careers, while in other locations CPD has been given lip service at best and, at worst, is non-existent.

This series was conceived to attempt to close some of these gaps and to offer accessible professional learning to busy teachers in the early stages of their careers. It was therefore a moment of genuine pleasure when proposals for an entitlement for all early career teachers to receive a package of support, guidance and education landed on my desk. There is now a genuine opportunity for school communities to work together to offer the very best early career development for our most precious of resources – the teachers in our schools.

The aim of this series is to distil some of the key topics which occupy the thoughts of early career teachers into digestible, informative texts which promote discussion, contemplation and reflection and will spark further exploration into practice. In each edition, you will find a series of practical suggestions for how you can put the ‘big idea’ in each chapter into practice – now, next week and in the long term. By offering opportunities to bring the learning into the classroom in a very concrete way, we hope to help embed many of the principles that are shared into day-to-day teaching.

In this first book in the series, Alys Finch explores a complex, yet vital, aspect of teaching: assessment. Her book makes manageable a topic which has often been fraught with confusion, myth and frustration and brings it to life in a pragmatic, practical and accessible way. Drawing on relevant research and practical experience, Alys guides the reader through some of the key principles and ideas behind assessment and offers ways in which to apply these to everyday practice.

I hope you enjoy exploring this book as much as I have enjoyed editing it.

Emma Hollis
Executive Director, NASBTT

Introduction

'Assessment' is a core aspect of all that we do in education: assessing others, assessing ourselves, assessing the impact of our work. It's a broad term which houses a wide range of processes, purposes, politics and pedagogies: negotiating the world of assessment can seem complex at best and impossibly confusing at worst.

This book aims to give you a path through the myriad facets of what can be meant by 'assessment' and some starting points for your own negotiation of this world to enable you to both maximise the positive impact of assessment on your learners and to begin to forge your own understanding of it. This book should provoke as many questions as it answers: you'll leave its pages with a sense of your learning about assessment rather than with all that you ever need to know. This book is intended to look at core ideas, key questions and to support you in your own construction of a definition of what 'assessment' means.

For the purposes of this book, the following definitions are used as a starting point for discussions, tasks and suggestions for further reading. They are based on the ideas and thinking outlined in this chapter. As you will see from the discussion which follows, there are ways in which the activities/strategies/approaches/interventions used for each of these aspects of assessment might overlap: the nuance between them is largely due to the intention of the use of that approach, in terms of future implications for both a teacher's practice and the learner's progress. There is a further discussion of some key terms and definitions for the purposes of this book in Chapter 1, 'The story so far'.

- » **Assessment for learning (AFL)** – activities/strategies/approaches/interventions used to support, challenge and extend learning. These might include: targeted questioning; confidence checks; checks on key skills; 'live marking'; revision activities; plenaries. Feedback is used to both check and build on learning by using the assessment as a key learning tool. The feedback is usually formative (ie developmental and focused on enabling progress rather than an end outcome) and intended to support the learner in their learning.
- » **Assessment of learning (AOL)** – activities/strategies/approaches/interventions used to check on what learning has taken place. This might include: end-of-unit tests; written exercises; presentations. Often done through outcomes-based tasks, the feedback is usually summative (ie one marker in time) and intended to check on where a learner has arrived at in their learning.
- » **Assessment for planning (AfP)** – this is closely related to AfL in that assessments of learners are used to inform, shape and adapt future planning.

This could include: using the misconceptions revealed in a task in one lesson to inform the focus of the next lesson, in which addressing these misconceptions now becomes the priority.

Assessment will be a part of your everyday work as a teacher. Hopefully, this book will enable you to begin to construct your own framework for developing the depth and breadth of your professional knowledge, as well as providing opportunities to think practically about what you do on a daily, termly, yearly and career-long basis. Indeed, it is intended to be a chance for you to *do* assessment for learning.



Acronym buster

Acronym	What does it stand for?	Notes/links
AfL	Assessment for Learning	
AoL	Assessment of Learning	
APP	Assessing Pupils' Progress	
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	
BfL	Behaviour for Learning	
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council Awards	
CEDP	Career Entry Development Profile	
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	
DfE	Department for Education	
ECF	Early Career Framework	
ECT	Early Career Teacher	
EEF	Education Endowment Foundation	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk
FSM	Free School Meals	
(GCE) A level	General Certificate of Education Advanced Level	Also known as 'A2'
(GCE) AS level	General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary Level	
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education	
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification	
HEI	Higher Education Institute	
INSET	In-Service Training	
ITE	Initial Teacher Education	

Acronym	What does it stand for?	Notes/links
ITT	Initial Teacher Training	
KPI	Key Performance Indicator	
LAC	Looked-After Children	
MESH	Mapping Education Specialist knowHow	www.meshguides.org
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research	
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher	
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification	
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation	
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills	
pGCE	Professional Graduate Certificate of Education	
PGCE	Post-Graduate Certificate of Education	
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment	
PRP	Performance-Related Pay	
QCDA	Qualifications and Curriculum Development Authority	
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status	
RQT	Recently Qualified Teacher	
SATs	Standard Attainment Tests	Based on the original name for these tests – now a colloquialism
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	

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