

## Assessment and film learning

### Assessment and film learning

The Primary Framework ([www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primaryframeworks/literacy/assessment](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primaryframeworks/literacy/assessment)) outlines the main purposes of assessment:

- assessment of learning (aol)
- assessment for learning (afl)

Assessment for learning, or formative assessment, is key in progressing to new levels of learning and understanding. The same principles that are outlined in the Framework can be applied to film learning. Added, where relevant, to the principles of planning outlined below are *points relating to film texts*:

To give all children the best opportunities for effective development and learning in communication, language and literacy, practitioners should give particular attention to:

- providing opportunities for children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings, and build up relationships with adults and each other;
- giving opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction books;
- *providing a wide range of film texts, including fiction, non-fiction and abstract texts;*
- giving opportunities for linking language with physical movement in action songs and rhymes, role-play and practical experiences such as cookery and gardening;
- *providing opportunities to watch texts where sound and images are used effectively and link these with dramatic role play and pupils own creation of music and sound for film;*
- planning an environment that reflects the importance of language through signs, notices and books ;
- *making film texts available on a regular basis*
- providing opportunities for children to see adults writing and for children to experiment with writing for themselves through making marks, personal writing symbols and conventional script;
- *watching and discussing film texts with children and sharing opinions;*
- providing time and opportunities to develop spoken language through conversations between children and adults, both one-to-one and in small groups, with particular awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of children learning English as an additional language, using their home language when appropriate;
- *providing opportunities to watch and work with foreign language film texts, subtitled texts examples of world cinema reflecting a variety of cultures;*
- providing time and opportunities for children to develop their phonological awareness through small group and individual teaching when appropriate;

## Assessment and film learning

- planning opportunities for all children to become aware of languages and writing systems other than English and communication systems such as signing and Braille;
- ***exploring film as another medium with its own language and codes;***
- early identification of, and response to, any particular difficulties in children's language development;
- close teamwork between bilingual workers, speech therapists and practitioners where appropriate;
- providing opportunities for children who use alternative communication systems to develop ways of recording and accessing texts to develop their skills in these methods;
- ***providing pre and post viewing activities involving spoken, physical, musical, dramatic, artistic and written responses to film texts;***

Criteria for assessment for learning (AfL) can also be directly related learning about film. The daily guidance notes on phonics have been adapted here to indicate how effective assessment can be planned:

- [Phonic] work for young children should be multi-sensory in order to capture their interests and sustain motivation and reinforce learning.
- Fidelity to a programme which conforms to the principles of best practice is key to success ... reinforcing and building on previous learning to secure children's progress. The most effective assessment is simple, rigorous and purposeful.
- ***Assessments should be used to plan the next steps in learning:*** Do children need more practice in a particular area, eg identification of camera shots? If so, which film could be used to demonstrate this effectively? Facial expression can be studied in close up shots of a person in *Dangle*; in *Little Pig is Flying* there long shots showing landscape.
- ***The sessions should be pitched at the appropriate step so learning is 'incremental'.*** See also 'Becoming Cineliterate – Learning Progression' in *Look Again* BFI 2003 eg
  - Stage 1 – children identify and discuss structuring features such as sound and music as key elements in a film;
  - Stage 2 – children discuss the use of sound and music to create meaning and effects.
- ***The sessions should reinforce and build on recent learning.*** Give children the opportunity to practise what they have learned, eg Once they have learned the difference between a close up and long shot, watch a film again to identify shots and re-view the film to explore why those shots are used and how a sequence of shots contributes to telling a story.
- ***The sessions should be engaging, pacy and use multi-sensory activities.*** Give children the opportunity to think about how different elements of a film work – listen to a soundtrack

## Assessment and film learning

without image, or view the images with no sound, to explore how sound and images are carefully constructed to work in harmony to create an overall effect.

- ***Children should have the opportunity to practise new knowledge.*** Children should work on different types of film texts, just as they should with print texts. Once they have learned how settings are created or camera angles are used to show points of view, they can use this knowledge to interpret meaning from a variety of texts.
- ***During the course of the session, the children should see how the new learning can be applied and contextualised by the teacher/practitioner modelling it.*** When framing a film for viewing, the teacher can show use of sound or camera shot by using an extract or still image, in order to demonstrate what children should be watching or listening for when they view a text.
- ***The teacher/practitioner plans other opportunities, beyond the discrete session, for children to apply their [phonic] knowledge and skills [in reading and writing] for real purposes across the curriculum.*** The teacher plans to use films as texts in their own right but also as supporting material in a variety of curriculum areas, whether a news report to show the effect of a storm, or a drama to illustrate a historical topic, providing a rich variety of contexts for film texts to be used in.

The following example uses ‘story’ and ‘character’ to illustrate how this ‘Review, Teach, Practise and Apply’ format can be used:

### REVISIT AND REVIEW

Talk about a film text and review the main questions:

What happened at the beginning, middle and end of the story?

Who are the main characters?



### TEACH

Discuss ideas of what ‘character’ means:

what a person looks like, how they talk, how they behave, what they are wearing.

Discuss elements of a story:

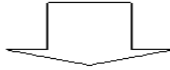
identifying main events, important things that happen in a story, flashback, juxtaposition of scenes



### PRACTISE

Watch film and ask the children individually or in pairs or groups  
to address the questions relating to story and character

## Assessment and film learning



### APPLY

Transfer the learning to another curriculum area, eg  
story writing , character description, hot-seating, storyboarding

### **Assessment and questioning**

As outlined in the Cs and Ss section of this web resource, not only is questioning crucial to interpretation, but it can also be a key element in meaningful assessment. When setting up work with a moving image text, preparation is vital. Questioning as a basis of an assessment procedure and should be integrated into planning. Ask children to focus on a particular element to gain material for initial assessment on their understanding of a text, its language and structure, eg

- What are the main story events?
- What is the story about?
- Whose story is this?
- Who are the main characters?
- Where is the story set?
- How do we meet the main character?

In follow up work, with creative, spoken and written activities, there are opportunities for observational assessment and to produce spoken and written evidence of learning.

### **Observational**

What are children's most obvious and instant responses to a text? Watching children watching a film is very telling. The major problem is trying to watch all of them at the same time. If other adults can be involved it is worthwhile briefing them beforehand and offering suggestions and points to look out for such as

- What do children say?
- When do they laugh?
- Do they talk through the film?
- What does their body language say?
- Are they relaxed or tense?

### **Spoken**

Some of these points fall within the observational sphere but combine to provide evidence as to how a child is engaging with a text, for example:

## Assessment and film learning

- Some children talk at the characters in screen.
- Some children narrate the story as it is happening, while others wait to comment afterwards.
- Some children will ask questions about the action as it is happening on screen. Some children ask because they need to know the answers to follow the plot. Others demonstrate their understanding of the plot by asking questions to clarify their thinking. For example, after watching *Pantofflehelden*, a child who is unsure about the second frog being real or not may ask, ‘Why is the frog crying?’ but a child who understands the action might ask, ‘Why is the frog crying because the other one’s stuffing is coming out?’

### Written

The evidence of learning can and should take many different forms, including

- Character descriptions, whether in single words or fuller descriptions
- Story summaries
- Ordering a story
- Creating new endings
- Writing their own questions to ask others
- The use of film language and key words in writing

With younger children spoken evidence is more prevalent, particularly when drama and play have been used to work creatively around a text. Children’s interactions though play can provide evidence of how a text has generated verbal responses, developed creative thought and creative language through both free and guided play activity.

A simple assessment framework based on evidence from questioning could be as follows:

Question	Observational	Spoken / drama	Written / creative
What are the main story events?	Child follows story and is engaged throughout watching.	Child retells the story in correct chronological order	Child produces written version of the story or pictorial representation, such as picture sequence or storyboard.
Who are the main characters?	Child talks about or points to characters whilst watching. Facial expression denotes recognition.	Child names characters and can give a reason for them being ‘main’ character. Child role-plays character displaying some characteristics from film.	Child does more drawing or written description using details from the film, eg, clothing, facial features, expressions or speech.