Digging Deeper into Self Assessment

Purpose:
To develop more specific self assessment questions for use where students are experienced at undertaking self assessment.

What you need:
- 1 copy of page 1-2 for each small team of 3-6 people
- 1 copy of pages 2-4 (back-to-back and stapled) for each teacher to keep
- 1 copy of page 5-6 (enlarged 140% to A3 size) per group.

Step 1:
- READ and HIGHLIGHT pages 2-4 about the “REAL Dimensions of Self Assessment” where REAL stands for: Reflection, Engagement and Authentic Learning developed by Helen Woodward and Geoff Munns at the University of Western Sydney.

Step 2:
- In small groups, use page 5 to DEVELOP similar types of probing questions for your students for a current area of their work.
  You do not need to develop too many probing questions at first. Start small.

Step 3:
- TRIAL one set of your self assessment probes with your class.
- SHARE with the group how the students went on these deeper self assessment probes.
Focus Question:
What can I use from the ideas on feedback and assessment for learning in UK primary classrooms?

Shirley Clarke talks about learning goals and feedback
Shirley Clarke, from the UK, has worked on assessment for learning with primary teachers and students. She is now an author of resource material and a consultant on assessment in the UK.

Interview transcript
Shirley Clarke was formerly a lecturer in assessment and curriculum at the Institute of Education, University of London, and is author of Targeting Assessment in the Primary Classroom, Unlocking Formative Assessment, and Enriching Feedback in the Primary Classroom.

In July 2002 she visited New Zealand at the invitation of the Ministry of Education, to speak to assessment groups. This is an edited transcript of an interview with Dr Jenny Poskitt, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Learning and Teaching at Massey University. She asked Shirley Clarke about practical ways for teachers to implement formative assessment strategies in the classroom.

Based on the findings in the Gillingham report, what strategies are there for … teachers to improve learning?

If they are working on their own and not making whole-staff decisions, it’s important to realise that it’s not a quick fix – they shouldn’t try to do everything in one day. They could start with sharing the learning intentions in the classroom, in one subject, and then begin to develop success criteria. Don’t worry about everything being perfect. Gradually, over a year, introduce other things, and see that year as an experiment.

How and when can teachers share learning intentions?
The usual time is in the first five minutes, when you tell the children, “We are learning to ...” and write it on the whiteboard.

Secondly, when you’re teaching, invite them to come up with the success criteria just before you give them the task: “What will you need to do to achieve this learning intention?” The teacher will have already planned these.

What might teachers think about when giving feedback?
The research shows that to be effective, whether it’s oral or written, feedback should be tailored to inform children about what they’ve done, against the learning intention of the task – rather than on other superficial features. At best, it should focus on where they achieve success, and how they can improve.

What strategies are there for giving feedback?
There are three basic approaches. The easiest is to refer the child to the learning intention of the task, as a reminder: “Can you explain more about this?” However, this is more effective with the brighter child, and not so helpful for many other children.
Digging Beneath the Surface

Helen Woodward and Geoff Munns, from the University of Western Sydney, have developed and trialed a sophisticated self assessment framework called the

“REAL Dimensions of Self Assessment”
where REAL stands for:
Reflection, Engagement and Authentic Learning.

They have developed a complex set of reflective questions as probes and prompts for use with primary students who have already become familiar with learning goals and basic self assessment and are in need of a process to help them dig deeper into their own learning. Woodward and Munns found that their framework of self assessment allows students to become more engaged in their own learning. These probes can also be used with secondary students.

They worked with teachers to develop prompts to ensure that students would self assess their:
• Feelings (affective)
• Thoughts (cognitive) and
• Actions (operative).

The prompts became progressively deeper as the students became more confident in reflecting on their learning. The reflective prompts and probing questions were developed to include each of the following types of thinking:
1. Thinking about achievement
2. Looking for evidence
3. Working with other people
4. Overcoming barriers
5. Reframing the task.

Woodward and Munns also developed icons for each of these types, (we have simply used a number, 1 to 5) and they have created at least one example question from each type in each of the boxes of their table. You should develop your own probing questions, or begin with trying some that Woodward and Munns have tried with primary children.

Woodward and Munns suggest that students have a “reflective notebook” or “self assessment notebook” that they write in regularly, responding to particular probes, that they - or their teacher - select.

You could use these types of reflective probes for self assessment in a variety of ways.

For example, as you begin digging deeper with self assessment, perhaps only use Woodward and Munns’ three No. 1 probing questions (Thinking about achievement) across the Content row:
• “What were the fun bits in your learning?” (feelings)
• “Write a memo to someone about the most important thing you learned today/yesterday.” (thoughts)
• “What new thing can you do now?” (actions)

Or you could use Woodward and Munns’ three No. 4 probing questions (Overcoming barriers) in the Content row:
• “How do you feel now when it gets tricky?” (feelings)
• “What was the tricky part?” (thoughts)
• “What is your biggest improvement?” (actions)

Another way to begin digging deeper would be to use all five probes in the Content/Feelings box, or in the Content/Thoughts box, or in the Content/Actions box.
As your students became more proficient you could use all three of the No. 3 (Working with other people) probing questions from the Content + Process row:

• “Why does cooperative learning make you feel great?”
• “What did you learn about working in groups while doing this work?”
• “What is the most valuable advice you could give to students who are involved in similar projects in the future?”

and so on.

Eventually your students will be able to use all the different types of probes and you can select, or have your students self-select, appropriate probe types and categories for particular instances of self assessment.

Note that the probing questions are only examples of each type in each category.

**You can - and should - create probes that are specific to your students and your work with them.**

Woodward and Munns have developed two deeper levels not shown here:

• Relational (relating feelings, thoughts & actions to other areas/processes)
• Conceptual (translating into concepts: feelings, thoughts, actions about learning processes).

That is another story.

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*Digging beneath the surface: Towards deeper dimensions of student self-assessment.*

Paper presented at the international conference on Enhancing Teaching and Learning through Assessment in Hong Kong, June.
Digging Deeper into Self Assessment (from Munns and Woodward 2005, p. 4-8)

### Example probing questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Feelings (Affective)</th>
<th>Thoughts (Cognitive)</th>
<th>Actions (Operative)</th>
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</table>
| - basic: recalling feelings, thoughts and actions | 1. What were the fun bits in your learning?  
2. What surprised you about your learning?  
3. How does working with others make you feel?  
4. How do you feel now when it gets tricky?  
5. What would make you feel better about today’s work? | 1. Write a memo to someone about the most important thing you learned today/yesterday.  
2. What is your best hard work?  
3. What cooperation helped your learning?  
4. What was the tricky part?  
5. Name two things to make you think harder. | 1. What new thing can you do now?  
2. List your strengths.  
3. Who helped you the most?  
4. What is your biggest improvement?  
5. What could you change about today’s work to help you improve? |
| Content + Process | 1. Why were the fun bits fun?  
2. Why were you surprised about your learning today?  
3. Why does cooperative learning make you feel great?  
4. How do you feel when you solved a problem?  
5. How could changes to today’s work make you feel better? | 1. What strategies do you use to learn something important?  
2. How did you know that you had learnt something?  
3. What did you learn about working in groups while doing this work?  
4. Write two questions you could not answer. Explain.  
5. Why do you think doing it differently will help with your learning? | 1. What goals did you set for yourself in this activity/task/project? How well did you achieve them?  
2. What is the evidence about your achievement of today’s learning?  
3. What is the most valuable advice you could give to students who are involved in similar projects in the future?  
4. How could we change this (lesson/unit/strategy/skill) next time we do this?  
5. What would you change if you were to do a similar task to improve your learning? |

*Office of Learning and Teaching, DE&T
Digging Deeper into Self Assessment (adapted from Munns and Woodward 2005)

Prompt/probe type:
1. Thinking about achievement
2. Looking for evidence
3. Working with other people
4. Overcoming barriers
5. Reframing the task

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<td>- developing feelings, thoughts and actions about learning processes</td>
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