

Professional learning paper:

Assessing progress and achievement in Literacy and English

Introduction

The Literacy and English Principles and Practice paper outlines the importance of literacy in developing learners' educational, emotional and social skills:

Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. Being literate increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life, lays the foundations for lifelong learning and work, and contributes strongly to the development of all four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence.

This resource supplements the Principles and Practice papers and the Experiences and Outcomes. As literacy is the responsibility of all, the purpose of this document is to support professional learning and reflection on assessing progress and achievement in Literacy and English by providing:

- further information on the significant aspects of learning
- an outline of what breadth, challenge and application look like.

It is designed to support quality assurance and moderation activities in planning for progression and approaches to managing assessment.

Significant Aspects of Learning

Teachers and learners will focus on developing the knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities detailed in the Experiences and Outcomes.

The Experiences and Outcomes in Literacy and English are organised within the same three components as Literacy and Gàidhlig, Gaelic (learners) and Modern Languages. The three components in each of these areas are:

- listening and talking
- reading
- writing

Each of these components is itself a significant aspect of learning within Literacy and English. Therefore, a learner can achieve a level in listening and talking or reading or writing.

Learners' progress within these three significant aspects of learning in Literacy and English will be evidenced as practitioners and learners gather, observe and reflect on evidence of their progression in relevant knowledge, understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities as they:

- engage with and create a broad range of texts, including Scottish and Scots texts
- use reading and listening strategies to understand, analyse and evaluate texts
- find and use information
- develop critical literacy skills, including evaluating sources

- write with increasing accuracy, making effective use of spelling, grammar and punctuation
- create texts of increasing complexity using more sophisticated language
- develop and use higher-order thinking skills.

What do breadth, challenge and application look like in Literacy and English?

Well-planned learning, teaching and assessment provides opportunities for learners to experience breadth, challenge and application across the significant aspects of Literacy and English. Learners should take an active part in planning, managing and assessing relevant and challenging learning experiences across the curriculum which will support them in developing the understanding and skills which are embedded in the significant aspects of learning.

Breadth

Learners will have opportunities to achieve in the significant aspects of learning in Literacy and English when they:

- communicate and collaborate across learning, in listening, talking, reading and writing
- engage with and create a broad range of texts, fiction and non-fiction, printed and multi-media, spoken and written, including Scottish texts
- extend and enrich their use of vocabulary, including Scots
- explore, discuss and use a wide variety of word patterns and text structures
- develop critical literacy in a wide range of contexts

Challenge

Learners will demonstrate their achievement through meeting challenges in terms of increasing:

- independence and reduced level of support, including peer/teacher support and support from resources such as writing frames, wordlists and dictionaries
- length and complexity of text and task
- use of higher order questions and critical skills
- confidence in taking the initiative (including asking for help) and sustaining communication.

Challenge in Literacy and English will involve engaging with a wide range of more complex texts which are suitable to the reading age of each learner. When learning to read, learners should be given opportunities to read for pleasure and challenge themselves with more advanced texts. It is also important that learners engage with digital texts from an early age and foster critical skills. Challenge involves using a wider range of language, engaging in critical, analytical and evaluative activities and asking and answering higher order, open-ended questions. Learners should be encouraged to produce work which is appropriate to purpose/audience and maintains high levels of technical accuracy.

Application

Learners should apply skills and understanding in a wide range of new and unfamiliar situations in all curriculum areas, in interdisciplinary work, in the life and ethos of the school, and in personal achievements in and out of school. These will include planned opportunities to apply literacy skills

across curricular areas and in real and meaningful contexts. Applying learning involves communicating to wider audiences, both across the curriculum and beyond the place of learning.

Planning for progression in Literacy and English

Learning in Literacy and English should be developed in an integrated way across the three significant aspects of learning as children and young people engage in a range of activities to develop their knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities. The following illustrates progression in each of the significant aspects of learning in the Literacy and English.

1. Listening and talking

Learners will develop from exploring sounds and patterns in language to listening to, discussing, analysing and evaluating a wide range of more challenging spoken texts. They will ask and answer higher order questions to inform critical understanding, evaluate the reliability of sources, select and use information to create new texts and make and organise notes for understanding. Learners will use verbal and non-verbal skills with greater confidence and should talk and listen for a range of purposes in a variety of contexts. In discussion, learners will progress from turn-taking and articulating ideas, thoughts and feelings to responding, questioning, challenging, summarising and building on contributions and using language effectively and confidently. Learners will work more independently to research, plan, create and deliver spoken texts of increasing complexity as appropriate to purpose and audience.

2. Reading

Learners will develop fluency and understanding by recognising patterns in language, blending sounds to decode unfamiliar words and sharing thoughts about texts. As they progress, learners will become more independent in choosing and analysing texts. They will read and discuss a wide range of more challenging fiction and non-fiction texts, read analytically using greater knowledge of language, compare and contrast texts from a more extensive variety of sources, ask and answer higher order questions, evaluate critically, recognise persuasion and find, select and use information in order to create a wide range of more complex written and oral texts, as appropriate to audience and purpose.

3. Writing

Learners will create an increasing variety of texts to suit different purposes and audiences. They will progress from mark making, formulating words and building sentences to creating more complex texts using a wider variety of language, making more sophisticated use of punctuation, grammar and structure. As they progress, learners will become more independent, making notes, planning, researching and writing with less teacher input. Learners will review and edit throughout the writing process, making effective use of layout and presentation to support meaning. Opportunities to write at length should be embedded across learning.

Further specific advice related to assessment in Literacy and English

In **listening and talking**, practitioners can observe and record learners' performances in individual presentations and discussions, focusing on their ability to engage respectfully with others, respond, question and contribute appropriately.

In **reading**, learners can demonstrate understanding and progress through finding and selecting information from a variety of sources, making notes and using these to create new texts, keeping a reading log/journal, creating close reading questions and responses, identifying and discussing key language features and aspects of the writer's style and reading aloud with fluency and expression.

In **writing**, learners can demonstrate progress by creating a wide range of increasingly complex texts in a variety of formats, taking account of purpose and audience. They will become more adept at organising and structuring ideas, employing a range of language for effect and writing with technical accuracy.

Opportunities to moderate listening, talking, reading and writing should be planned, either separately or in a more integrated way. Practitioners could, for example, look at examples of writing from other curricular areas, focusing on the learning and teaching approaches to examine whether skills for writing have been transferred. Reading skills might be moderated alongside writing as practitioners scrutinise the planning, learning and assessment involved in reading to create a new text. Moderation of talk might involve looking at planning to ensure success criteria are consistent and that the learner can transfer skills to different curricular areas.

Learners may progress at different rates in different components and can achieve a level in one component of Literacy and English before doing so in others.

Responsibility of all: Literacy across learning

Practitioners should assess literacy where it is integrated and forms a substantial part of learning. Listening and talking permeates all areas of the curriculum: whenever a learner presents to an audience, either formally or informally, verbal and non-verbal communication skills could be assessed as well as the content of the talk. In reading and writing, learners may, for example, create an extended piece of writing which involves researching and note making. Here, practitioners could assess learners' skills in finding and using information, in employing the tools for writing (punctuation, spelling and grammar) as well as in the understanding of content.

Next steps

Practitioners are encouraged to use this document to support professional dialogue through quality assurance and moderation activities. It may be used by individuals to inform reflection on practice and plan for improvement in approaches to supporting learners in their progress and achievement.