



Making the most of low stakes assessments

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Starting point

- ▶ By 'low stakes', I mean assessments that are not part of accountability measures:
 - ▶ principally, formative assessment activities that are part of day-to-day teaching - e.g. questioning
 - ▶ but also tests/assessments that may feed into pupil progress meetings or other tracking.

Thinking about low stakes assessments

... why assess?

... what is assessed?

... in what ways do/could teachers assess pupils' learning in mathematics?

... what happens as a result?



Low stakes assessments – why and what

Why?


- ▶ My premise: to find out how well pupils are learning.

What?

- ▶ Most emphasis on knowledge and proficiency; some on problem solving; least on reasoning



2017 KS2 test questions



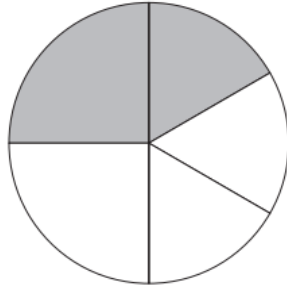
Adam buys **6** bags of white balloons.
Chen buys **3** bags of red balloons.

Adam says,

'I have four times as many balloons as Chen.'


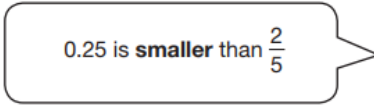
Explain why Adam is correct.

In this circle, $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{6}$ are shaded.



What fraction of the whole circle is **not** shaded?

Adam says,



Explain why he is correct.

Low stakes assessments – ways

- ▶ Ways? Through:
 - ▶ what pupils write/do, including classwork, homework, tests/exams, practical activity and problem solving
 - ▶ what pupils say in their:
 - ▶ answers to teacher's questions
 - ▶ explanations/reasoning
 - ▶ questions, e.g. when seeking help/clarification, or when taking their thinking/interest further/deeper
 - ▶ in discussions with other pupils.

Low stakes assessments – what happens next?

- ▶ What the pupil does/writes/says should be influential in what the teacher says next and/or how she/he adapts the teaching.
- ▶ When assessing written work, teachers/leaders sometimes use the information for intervention and follow-up teaching. Too rarely, they consider how the teaching approach might have supported or impeded the learning, and therefore seek to improve the approach and/or the curriculum planning.

Assessment as an integral part of teaching

Before lessons	During lessons	After lessons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Planning - check essential prior learning▪ Decide on new learning - teaching strategy and careful choice of resources that allow understanding to be developed/deepened and misconceptions to arise.▪ Be aware of key learning points and likely misconceptions/errors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Check learning by questioning, observing, listening - ask follow-up questions to probe.▪ Provide ongoing informal feedback, usually verbally.▪ Use correct and incorrect responses and approaches to questions to make teaching points.▪ Adapt teaching in light of responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reflection and marking - inform next lesson(s) and, possibly, intervention.▪ Marking of tests/exams informs future teaching.▪ QLA can support work to improve teaching and curriculum.

Final thoughts

- ▶ ... so much depends on the quality and richness of assessment and how teachers use it. These in turn depend on teachers' subject and pedagogic knowledge
- ▶ ... how well does assessment reflect the whole curriculum? Taken together, does it probe the breadth and depth of learning that all pupils should be experiencing: fluency (that flexible blend of understanding and proficiency), problem solving and mathematical reasoning?



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