

TEIGN SCHOOL

RESPONSIVE ASSESSMENT POLICY

2025-26

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1. INTRODUCTION

Feedback through assessment at Teign School is an integral part of the teaching and learning process for all pupils. Using the [EEF Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning](#) guidance this means that feedback must be appropriately timed and delivered, as well as made use of by pupils in order for it to be effective. The Evidence Based Education guide on The Four Pillars of Assessment (summarised in Appendix 1 and found here in full) provides a foundation for continuing to develop best practice, within the structures of assessment that exist across Education South West.

2. PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

- To provide the necessary evidence to support feedback that is deliverable to pupils, shareable with staff and in reporting progress, and usable in future planning.
- To enable pupils to understand where they are in their learning and what they need to do next.
- To diagnose each pupil's misconceptions and obstacles to learning and review curriculum planning in light of this, adapting teaching according to areas of need

3. TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Formative Assessment – where progress is assessed and teaching is adjusted moment by moment. This may take the form of targeted questioning or through learning tools such as mini-whiteboards, tracking pupils as they attempt tasks, or reviewing a pupil's study book in a 1:1 conversation, asking questions to uncover and remove blocks and gaps in understanding.
- 3.2 Formal Summative Assessment – where all pupils are assessed to see how much learning has taken place. For example, mid and end of cycle assessments and Pre-Public Exams (PPEs).
- 3.3 External Assessment – public examinations in Level 1, 2 and 3 courses such as GCSEs, A Levels, Btec and Cambridge National vocational qualifications.

4. RESPONSIVE ASSESSMENT

Our principles of Responsive Assessment:

- 4.1 To focus on how pupils learn - the process of learning (metacognition) has to be in the minds of both teacher and pupil, utilising a variety of teaching and learning strategies. Pupils are assessed and the assessment outcomes are shared with them.
- 4.2 To foster a growth mindset - Assessment should emphasise the progress pupils have made in terms that a pupil can both understand and make progress from. Timely, specific and individualised feedback can improve pupil motivation by fostering a growth mindset and desire to improve. Feedback that comes as the

result of assessing learning following high quality instruction should therefore aim to support pupils to take risks in a secure environment, in order to learn from mistakes and misconceptions

- 4.3 To show pupils how to improve - pupils need explicit feedback on the steps that they are following and how to move along these steps. They need specific statements about their current strengths, but also the new skills and knowledge they might acquire to move to the next level. Through this process, teachers will be able to plan ahead and so develop a longer-term view about pupils. They will develop from individuals striving to achieve specific goals in one context, to intrinsically motivated pupils with a long term understanding of their learning.
- 4.4 To promote understanding of goals and criteria - all pupils need to understand what it is that they are trying to achieve. Teachers must share the purpose and where appropriate the rationale for specific learning, ensuring pupils know what the expected outcomes will be so that both teachers, and pupils can judge if the planned goal has been achieved.
- 4.5 To develop a capacity for self-assessment - pupils have difficulty standing back and forming judgement about their learning. All pupils need to be taught how to use information about past performances and to use this to develop future actions. All pupils need to reflect on how well they have done and why. They will be enabled to move towards greater independence as pupils if they are more included in the process that judges how successful they have been.
- 4.6 To be part of effective planning - pupils respond appropriately to teachers' feedback as directed in response time allocated through lesson and curriculum planning. This is essential to help the pupils and teacher to come together to gain information about progress being made. In this way it is more likely that future planning would be influenced by what has gone before and both teacher and pupil will be prepared for future lessons.
- 4.7 To use targets to help pupils know how to improve - Teign School uses a system of target setting which takes into account KS2 scores (where unavailable, CATS data is used with DfE formulas applied) and NGRT data. These targets are used primarily by the school and trust in data analysis exercises to inform strategic planning, but may be used by teachers and Leaders of Personal Development as a benchmark to support planning and identify opportunities for intervention.

5. THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN ASSESSMENT

At Teign School all teachers:

- recognise that all pupils can improve;
- plan opportunities and strategies to help pupils to understand the 'how' of learning as well as the 'what';
- provide feedback on pupil work, not the pupil themselves. Methods of feedback are appropriate for the pupil/pupils in receipt of it and their developmental stage. Verbal and written feedback is constructive and developmental, including specific and effort or achievement orientated praise.

- be clear about a pupil's strengths and how to develop these as their areas for improvement and identify the next steps needed for them to make progress and share these with the pupils;
- encourage independent learning by enabling pupils to take charge of their learning through developing their skills of reflection, self-assessment and their capacity to identify next steps;
- praise progress and reward achievement including through the school's praise and reward systems;
- Recognise that formative assessment is embedded across all learning activities and that this serves a purpose at school, teacher and pupil level.

6. FEEDBACK EXPECTATIONS

	KS3 – Years 7-9	KS4 – Years 10-11	KS4 – Years 12-13
Formative	• Pupils receive verbal feedback as a routine part of lesson delivery • Pupils receive timely whole-class or individualised feedback throughout each cycle in line with the principles of responsive assessment		
Formal Summative	Mid-cycle assessments (some subjects) End of cycle assessments (all subjects)	<u>Year 10</u> Mid-cycle assessments (some subjects) End of cycle assessments (all subjects) – at the end of Cycle 3 this takes the form of PPE Term 3b <u>Year 11</u> PPE1 – Term 1b PPE2 – Term 2b	Year 12 and 13 may be assessed in line with end of cycle assessment windows depending on course requirements. <u>Y12</u> PPE – Term 3b <u>Year 13</u> PPE – Term 2a
External		Spring and Summer public exam seasons Year 11 Some Non-Examined Assessments may work to spring and summer submission dates in Years 10 and 11	Spring and Summer public exam seasons Year 13 Some Non-Examined Assessments may work to spring and summer submission dates in Years 12 and 13

Note on Formal Summative Assessments in KS4 and KS5:

Pre Public Exams or Graded Assessments – Level descriptors are published before the assessments, but grades may be adjusted through moderation. They will be marked in accordance with Exam Board mark schemes and examiner reports, highlighting where Assessment Objectives or Success Criteria have been met. Teachers/leaders complete an exam analysis proforma which includes most common misconceptions and errors, overall successes and consistent gaps. Appropriate time is given to feedback sessions following PPEs and pupils are given time to practise and improve based on their feedback. The pupil is aware that these assessments form the basis of their report grades.

4 PILLARS OF GREAT ASSESSMENT



1. PURPOSE



A clearly defined purpose is the most important part of great assessment.

Defining the purpose of an assessment is the starting point which will enable you to judge its validity for that purpose, its reliability in fulfilling its purpose, and its value to students, teachers and your community.

2. VALIDITY



There is no such thing as a valid assessment. An assessment is a process which generates information. When we talk of validity and great assessments, we are referring to the assessment's ability to support the claims we want to make based on the information generated.

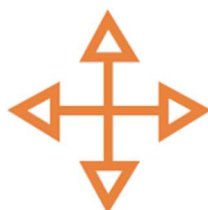
There are assessments which generate information valid for particular purposes, but there is no such thing as a valid assessment.

3. RELIABILITY



This is an important part of great assessment, but think about purpose and validity before reliability. We can end up creating reliable assessments (they produce consistent data) which have no validity for the purpose we have in mind. Similarly, we can end up with an assessment which is wholly valid for a specific purpose, but completely unreliable.

4. VALUE



A great assessment is valuable. Assessments can be very costly. Think of the time, effort and money involved in developing and administering them; think of the time and effort students expend on completing them; think of the time taken grading and feeding back on them.

The value of an assessment should be commensurate with its investment.

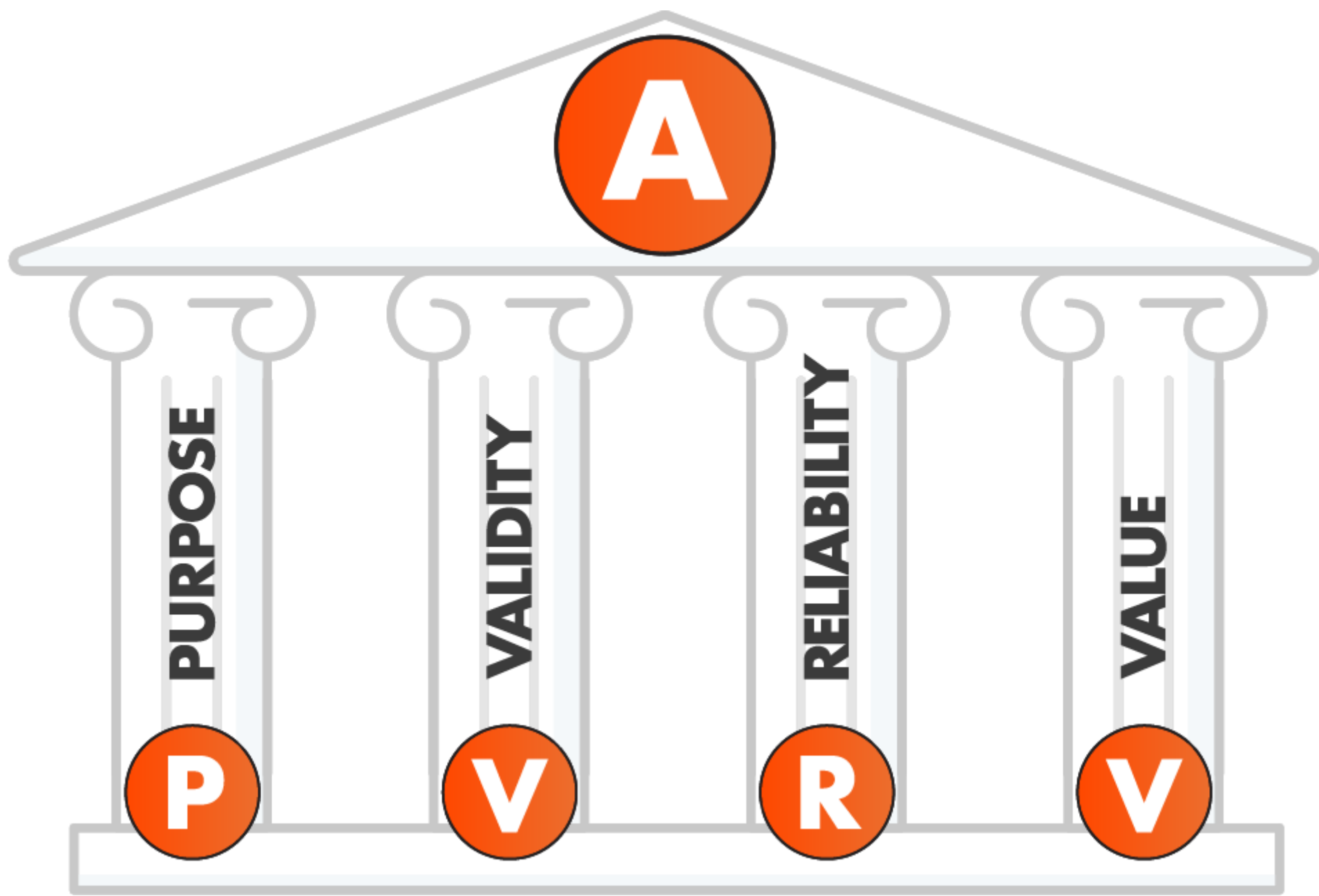
THE FOUR PILLARS OF ASSESSMENT

A RESOURCE GUIDE

Appendix 2

BY EVIDENCE
BASED EDUCATION





INTRODUCTION

If we were building a new school, we wouldn't start without laying firm foundations. In the same way, we can't develop great assessment practice without a strong base knowledge of the key theory around assessment.

We have distilled this theory down into the four pillars of great assessment: **purpose**, **validity**, **reliability** and **value**.

The Four Pillars of Assessment resource guide will provide you with a strong understanding of what underpins each pillar and how it supports great assessment.

Practical support to apply the principles of great assessment are available through our training courses.



1. Purpose

THE IMPORTANCE OF PURPOSE

We live in an information age, at a time when the quantity of information in our lives often outweighs the quality of it.

Assessments used to generate information on which decisions are made about student learning need to provide high-quality information fit for the purposes intended. There are dozens of reasons why you might assess pupils, and the ideal type of assessment is different depending on the purpose. However, it is not uncommon to lose sight of the function of assessment.

Assessment can also become all things to all people, where information collected for one purpose is also used as a measure of something entirely different. For example:

An end-of-year assessment designed to measure attainment in mathematics, but which tests only certain components of mathematics (multiplication, division and place values, for instance), cannot be used to draw conclusions about maths attainment in general (the intended purpose), only the components it includes. Matters are complicated when questions in the assessment contain overly complex wording. The assessment now requires sufficient reading skill to access the maths at the heart of the assessment, thereby disadvantaging weaker readers.

Until you are clear about exactly what your different purposes are, you won't be able to use the right assessments.



THREE STEPS FOR ROBUST ASSESSMENT

Purpose is the most important of the four pillars of great assessment. We must know what we want to measure and why, in order to select the right tool to achieve our purpose.

These three steps are always at the heart of any robust and purposeful assessment:

- 1. The construct:** What is the specific knowledge, skill or understanding (drawn from the curriculum) that we intend to assess?
- 2. The end use:** What do we want to do – the interpretation, the decision or action – with the information generated by the assessment process?
- 3. The best tool:** What and when is the most appropriate, effective and efficient way to assess in this instance?

Without clear answers to these questions, it is impossible to use assessment effectively. If we don't have a specific goal for an assessment, there is no way of knowing if it is any good at providing the information we need from it. And without good information, guiding students along their learning journey is difficult.

ARE YOUR ASSESSMENTS FIT FOR PURPOSE?

What sorts of assessments do you use in schools? Is everyone clear about what their intended purpose is and how the information from them will be used? Are they fit for their intended purpose, or have they been warped over time – bent out of shape to fit a need in school? Or perhaps they're done because ... well... "we've always done them"!

Make sure the most is made of your time on assessment with appropriate, dependable measures to make appropriate, dependable claims and judgements.



2. Validity

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A VALID ASSESSMENT!

Validity is perhaps the most commonly-used word in discussions about the quality of any assessment. While it's used a lot, it is often misunderstood and can be very misleading.

Validity is a word which, in assessment, refers to two things:

- The ability of the assessment to test what it intends to measure.
- The ability of the assessment to provide information which is both valuable and appropriate for the intended purpose

A common **misconception** about validity is that it is a property of an assessment, but in reality, there is no such thing as 'a valid assessment'.

However, there is such a thing as 'an assessment which is valid for a specific purpose': validity is all about the inferences you make based on the information generated.



In many cases, there are two reasons that assessments end up not quite hitting their target: construct under-representation and construct-irrelevant variance.

Construct under-representation: is where the assessment fails to capture important aspects of the construct, e.g., it is not fully representative of the target of the assessment.

Construct-irrelevant variance: the assessment outcomes are influenced by things other than just the construct, e.g., inaccessible language.

When we talk of validity and great assessments, we are referring to the assessment's ability to support the claims we want to make based on the information generated.

IMPROVING VALIDITY

One of the key validity checks we can do when assessing the quality of an assessment is to consider: is there either construct under-representation or construct-irrelevant variance in this assessment? Defining the construct – saying what is and isn't included in it – is a vital part of a robust assessment process. It is one way in which we can avoid construct under-representation and construct-irrelevant variance.

Ensuring that an appropriate and meaningful range of marks is used to represent performance at particular levels of achievement is another aspect of improving the validity of an assessment. If there are 50 marks available on an assessment task, but no student is awarded more than 35 marks or less than 20, is the assessment really out of 50?

Assessment validity is all about the inferences you make based on the information generated. Therefore, it is important to ask, does the assessment allow you to make inferences which are valid?



3. Reliability

WHAT IS A RELIABLE ASSESSMENT?

Reliability in the assessment of student learning is about accuracy and consistency over time and context. As we saw with validity, a determination of how reliable an assessment needs to be is informed by its intended end uses.

There are lots of factors which contribute to the reliability of an assessment, but two of the most critical for teachers to acknowledge are:

- the precision of the questions and tasks used in prompting students' responses
- the accuracy and consistency of the interpretations derived from assessment responses

"NO ASSESSMENT IS 100% RELIABLE BUT WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND RELIABILITY IN ORDER TO IMPROVE IT"

An assessment is a means by which we can create a set of circumstances in which a student can represent their knowledge, skill and understanding in an observable form. Because it is a proxy for something unseen, and because interpretation is often part of making sense of the information derived from an assessment, error is always present in some form or other. Some sources of error include:

- the assessor's unfamiliarity with the topic being assessed
- the assessor's unfamiliarity with robust assessment practices
- bias (teachers are human, after all!)
- the subjectivity of the material to be assessed
- the conditions in which students take the assessment



IMPROVING ASSESSMENT RELIABILITY

There are lots of ways in which classroom assessment practices can be improved in order to increase reliability, and one of the most immediate is to improve rater reliability.

Inter-rater reliability: getting people to agree with one another on simple matters can be hard enough, so when it comes to complex judgements (such as whether the grades two teachers award independently for the same writing task are consistent with each other), reliability challenges arise.

Intra-rater reliability: most people acknowledge that it is difficult to achieve high levels of inter-rater reliability, but an often overlooked challenge also comes from the accuracy and consistency of one's own judgements. Imagine your responses to a set of different assessment tasks of the same quality, but at different times during the day, week, month and year. Particularly in areas of subjectivity – where judgement is needed – you can imagine how your decisions, comments and grading of assignments may vary dependent on time of day, hunger, how many other tasks you're juggling in your mind, caffeine ingestion...

Improving rater reliability begins by acknowledging that assessments always have a degree of unreliability inherent in them. Improving reliability will improve the quality of the information derived from the assessment process, thus increasing its potential value to teachers and students. Below are three ways to improve reliability of assessment in school:

- Use exemplar student work to clarify what success looks like in specific assignments: be explicit about these criteria
- Blind-mark assignments: this reduces bias and increases rater reliability
- Blind-moderate samples of students' work: this increases rater reliability and also offers a good professional development opportunity to share standards

Well-designed multiple-choice quizzes can be a reliable form of assessment and can offer diagnostic information to support teaching and learning activity.



4. Value

IS IT WORTH THE EFFORT?

Every minute that a teacher, student, leader, parent or governor spends engaging with assessment is a minute that wasn't spent doing something else. As such, assessment carries with it a high opportunity cost; the value derived from the former should be at least commensurate with the latter (if it's not, we should probably do something else).

Calculate the time spent on a single assessment process (creating, administering, pupils doing, marking and feedback to pupils, data entry). How much time was taken? How much value did the assessment add to the learning process?

Our first pillar, purpose, is a key aspect of assessment value. A clear purpose increases the value of assessment information by ensuring that, as Ronseal would say, **"it does exactly what it says on the tin"**.

SURPRISE, SURPRISE

An assessment that can't surprise you isn't an assessment, so value also lies in the power to raise an eyebrow.

Building a bridge between teaching and learning is part of the role played by assessment; we can't physically peer into a brain to find out how much geographical knowledge is in there, so we need proxies. We need bridges. Yet, if the bridges we use are not built robustly, and in a way that allows new and unusual views to be encountered as we cross, they fail to function as they should and their value to teachers and learners diminishes drastically.

Do you and your teaching staff know enough about assessment to describe accurately the quality of assessments used in your school or college?



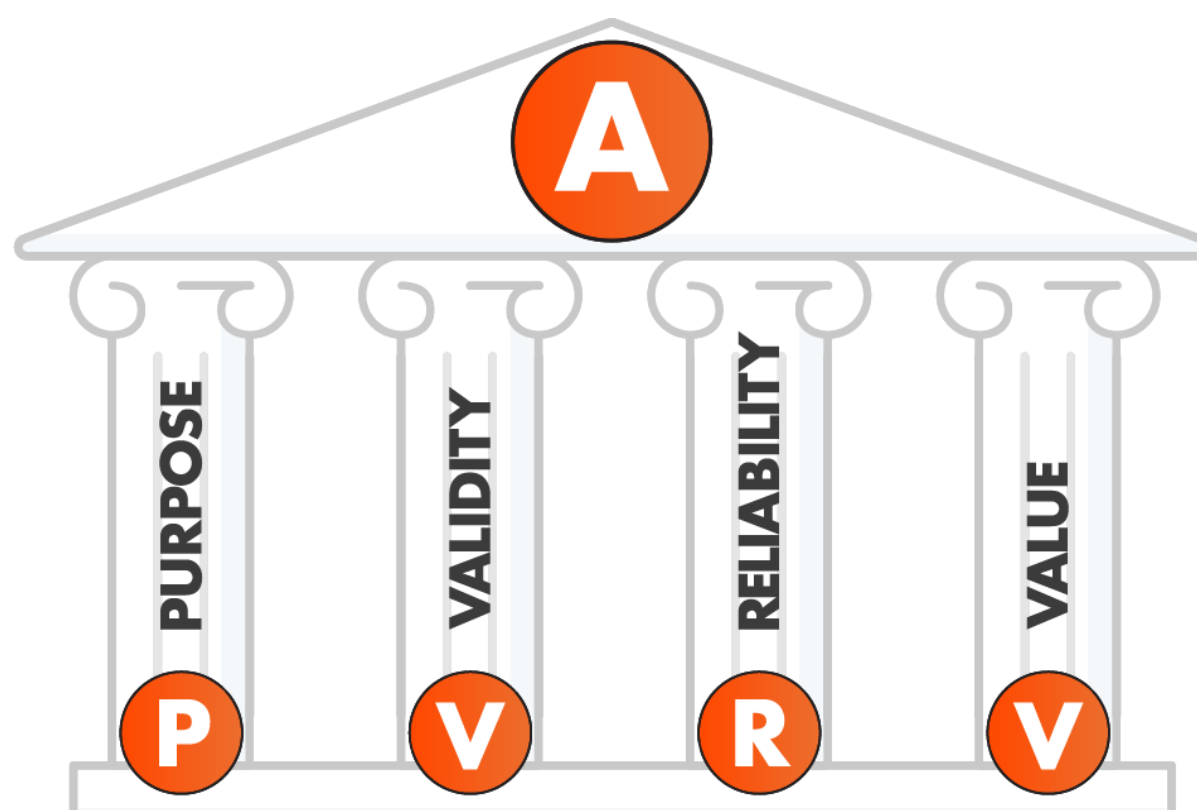
WASHBACK

Assessments can have positive and negative effects, something known as the washback effect. The intended effects of assessment, such as pupils studying more, or high-quality feedback for learning, are known as positive washback. The unintended negative effects from assessment – such as unmanageable workload, teaching to the test, decreased time for other activities – are the negative washback effects.

In many ways, effective assessment is learning how to maximise positive washback and minimise negative washback. The main way in which we approach this is to create strong and explicit links between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

"IT IS INFORMATION DERIVED FROM WELL-DESIGNED, PURPOSEFUL, PLANNED ASSESSMENTS WHICH BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN TEACHING AND LEARNING."

Better information can inform **better decisions**, and better decisions can lead to **better learning**. And if that's not the most valuable outcome, what is?





Evidence Based Education

ASSESS BETTER

The concepts touched upon in this guide feature in the **Assessment Lead Programme** – a course of professional development to enhance the knowledge, skill and confidence to use assessment in school to support learning.

You will benefit from practical tools, guides and support so that you can effectively translate assessment theory into practice.

According to Phil Stock, Deputy Headteacher at Greenshaw High School, "the content is of the **highest class**... It draws down **all that we know about effective CPD**."

The Assessment Lead Programme delivers whole-school impact – from the improvement of your school's assessment policy and framework to the creation of powerful formative assessment questions and quizzes for use in the classroom.

To find out more, simply click on the words **ASSESS BETTER!**

