

A Model of Formative Assessment in Music Education.

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Background

Integrating formative assessment practices into teaching and learning moves assessment away from the culture of testing. (Gipps1994)

Research has shown that the opportunity to include pupils in the formative assessment process gives rise to an improvement in learning and motivation. (Blom & Poole 2004)

Key Aims

- To explore pupils' experience of the processes of learning and assessment in music lessons.
- To include pupils in the assessment process and enhance self-regulation of their learning.
- Explore the use of formative assessment in encouraging pupils to engage in self-assessment and peer assessment.
- To contribute to the development of the theory of music learning and assessment.

Methodology

In order to develop a formative assessment model an iterative design was chosen using the method of action research with a music class of eleven grade 8 pupils at an international school in Slovenia.

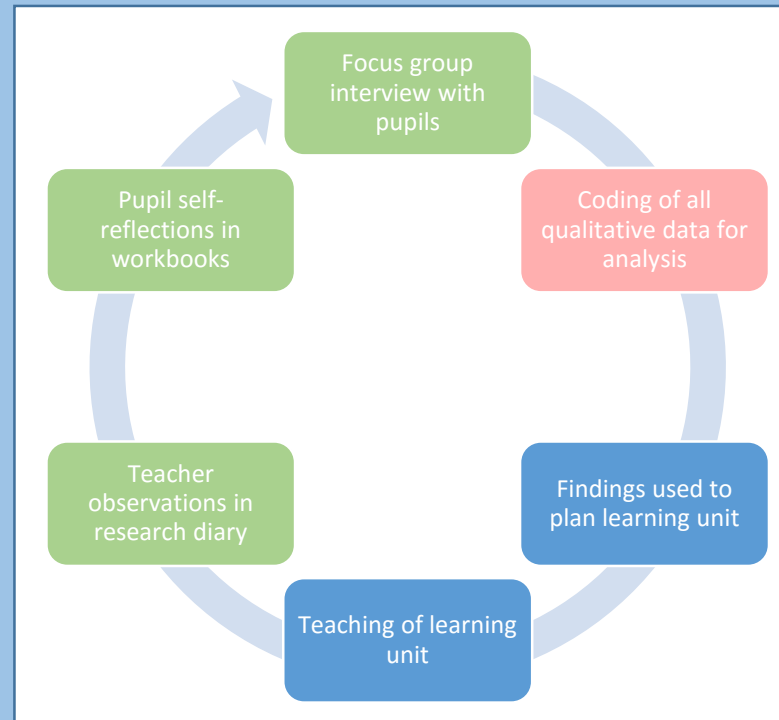
One of the authors took on the role of music teacher and facilitated formative feedback at every stage by scaffolding self-reflection, peer assessment, self regulation, and giving descriptive comment-only feedback.

Action cycle 1

Duration: 5 months
Unit: "Composing music to text"
Focus: self-assessment

Action cycle 2

Duration: 3 months
Unit: "Creating Impressionist Music"
Focus: self-regulation



Critique

- The choice of action research is an appropriate methodology as it integrates participants into the research process mirroring the formative assessment practices of pupil inclusion. (Cain 2012: 417).
- The use of action research methods mean that the findings of research have an immediate impact on the assessment culture in the music lessons (Cohen et al. 2011: 345).
- The formative assessment model described uses feedback to inform planning, and peer assessment and collaborative learning to improve self-regulation (Black 2015: 170).
- The model is consistent with the constructivist paradigm with the inclusion of pupils in the assessment process when defining performance criteria and in the use of self and peer assessment practices. (Dann 2014: 151).

Findings

- Pupils did not value assessment based on numeric grades.
- Pupils valued descriptive assessment comments and peer assessment, and recognised the importance of self-evaluation.
- Pupils' motivation levels improved across the action cycles.
- Inclusion of pupils in the formative assessment model changed students' perception of assessment and enhanced self-regulation.

- Reliability of interviews is in question where no examples are given of the questioning used. (Cohen et al. 2011: 205)
- The study has low external validity without any description of the context or inclusion of sufficient qualitative data examples in the text. (Cohen et al. 2011: 186)
- There are issues with construct validity where 'self-regulation' is not defined in the literature review and where pupils self-evaluate their 'energy', 'interest' and 'knowledge' levels but these concepts are also not described. (Trochim 2006)
- Internal validity is compromised where self-evaluation of motivation levels is used as a measure of self-regulation. (Cohen et al. 2011: 183)