

Standards Unit

IMPROVING DIFFERENTIATION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

TOPIC 4: DIFFERENTIATION BY ASSESSMENT

FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

Activity 3: Applying formative assessment methods (1 hr, 30 mins)

Facilitator notes

The purpose of this activity is to encourage participants to put into practice new approaches to formative assessment.

PowerPoint slides

PowerPoint Slide 19 shows the objective. There are no other slides.

At some point during the session it's worth emphasising to participants that they may not experience instant success when trying out new strategies but that they should still persevere. Our experience shows that after using the methods several times learners begin to respond.

You should encourage participants to start with a group of learners they feel comfortable and confident with. They can then try the approaches with different groups of learners and compare responses. They will then be able to decide which methods are suitable for which learners.

Now read the activity.

Objective

- To investigate and practise applying a wider range of formative-assessment techniques to your session planning.

Resources

PowerPoint Slide 19 with objective for session

Checking learning evaluation sheet

Checking learning resource sheet

Example of a 'memory matrix'¹⁰ with completed version on back

Blank session-plan proformas, with columns to show how learning is assessed

Each participant will need to bring two copies of a session plan they have completed so that they can work in pairs on them.

Facilitator notes

The purpose of this first stage is to introduce participants to a wider range of methods of checking learning. It also gives them an opportunity to assess their current practice.

Some of the suggested methods for checking learning will be familiar to some participants but not to others. This first stage allows for these different levels of familiarity and we have provided a back-up resource sheet to use if needed. This resource sheet provides a brief explanation of methods listed on the 'Checking learning evaluation sheet'. As the explanations are brief, you may need to give more detailed explanations to participants if requested. You will need, therefore, to ensure that you yourself are familiar with the methods and terms.

¹⁰See Glossary.

Participants may want to add their own methods to the end of the resource sheet, or add methods that were noted and discussed in Activity 2 'Exploring formative assessment and feedback'.

Stage 1 (in fours) (25 mins)

- Look at the checking learning evaluation sheet.
- Discuss each of the methods of checking learning in the left-hand column. If they are not familiar to you, see if someone else in your group can explain them to you. If no one is familiar with the method refer to the 'Checking learning resource sheet'.
- Evaluate each of the methods against the criteria along the top. Try to reach agreement on this in your group.
- Assess individually how often you use each of the methods, and complete the final column.
- Identify, as a group, two or three new methods that you might try. Prepare to feed these back to the whole group.

Stage 2 (as a whole group) (15 mins)

- A representative from each small group should present the two or three new methods you have selected.

Discuss your overall findings about:

- which methods are best for providing feedback to learners;
- which are best for giving you feedback on the effectiveness of your teaching;
- when you might use the different types of assessment method;
- whether some are less suitable for certain types of learners – for example, learners with low levels of literacy.

Facilitator notes

In some cases anonymous feedback from learners can be more honest and effective.

Some methods in particular lend themselves to this, for example:

- empty outlines;
- memory matrix;
- one word/phrase/sentence re-cap;
- minute paper.

Suggest to participants that learners can place their comments in an envelope that is passed around, or write them on sticky notes and stick them on the back of the door as they leave a session. This can help the teacher or trainer check learning and plan for the next session.

Facilitator notes for Stage 3

A blank session-plan proforma is provided for the next stage of this activity. It's important that participants bring their own completed session plans to work on.

An alternative would be to provide a 'mocked-up' session plan that they work on improving, or a session plan where the information on checking learning is missing and participants are requested to add it.

Stage 3 (in pairs) (45 mins)

- Review the session plans you've brought with you and consider:
 - where in the session you check that all learners are understanding and making progress;
 - how you do this;
 - whether this provides you with a clear idea of how well each learner is doing;
 - whether learners have a clear idea of how well they're doing and how they might improve;
 - whether you gain insights into the effectiveness of your teaching;
 - what other techniques you might use.
- Revise the session plan to improve your checking and feedback. Try to include some methods that are not teacher-led.

- Transfer these revisions to the blank session-plan proforma. In addition to the method for checking learning, note whether it's teacher-led, self-assessment, peer assessment or computer-based assessment.
- Feed back to the main group one or two developments you've made.

Facilitator notes

Taking the session forward

You may want to encourage participants to commit themselves to taking further action to develop their assessment and feedback techniques. They could agree to try one or two methods then arrange to compare experiences at a future date.

Or, they may want to meet in curriculum teams to look at their schemes of work again and to consider how they might:

- better plan which formative assessment methods to use;
- distribute these to avoid 'overkill';
- use them to reinforce each other.