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Materials for this topic are available on the 'CPD resource' and 'Supporting materials' CD-ROMs.

Standards Unit

IMPROVING DIFFERENTIATION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

TOPIC 4: DIFFERENTIATION BY ASSESSMENT

Topic overview

Topic 4 looks at assessment and how it can be used to learn more about individual learners' needs and to meet them better (that is, to use assessment to differentiate). The topic focuses particularly on formative assessment including 'assessment for learning'⁷. Regular formative assessment, accompanied by constructive feedback, has a significant impact on learning.

The activities explore how formative assessment can provide feedback to teachers and trainers on individual learners' progress, and also on the effectiveness of their teaching strategies. Some of the techniques explored also feature in Topic 1 and Topic 2.

The subject is divided into three parts, each of which contains an activity. The divisions are shown below, with approximate timings for each activity. These parts are designed to make up a coherent training programme, which could be delivered as a half-day or one-day programme or split into a series of shorter sessions.

Activity 1: Why assess? (1 hr-1 hr, 15 mins)

This preparatory activity enables participants to review reasons why we assess learners and learning and look at some of the terminology used in assessment. If time is short, or if participants are more experienced, you may prefer simply to set the scene using the

PowerPoint slides provided, before going straight into the second activity.

Activity 2: Exploring formative assessment and feedback (1 hr, 15 mins)

Participants consider which methods they currently use to check learning. They consider the advantages and limitations and how they could make them less teacher or trainer-led. The activity looks at the value of feedback and how it contributes to learning, and gives examples of research findings.

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

This activity introduces a wider range of methods of checking learning and asks participants to consider the value of each of them. Participants then work on their own session plans to introduce new approaches to assessment and feedback.

Each activity has facilitator guidance and participants' briefing sheets, also available on the 'CPD resource' CD-ROM. The facilitator guidance includes details of resources you'll need and suggests PowerPoint slides to use. It also offers suggestions about how you might use and follow up the activity.

⁷See Glossary.

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FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

Facilitator notes

The purpose of this topic on differentiation by assessment is to look at how assessment techniques can be used to help meet the needs of each individual learner. The topic focuses on formative methods of assessment and looks at how these can be used to check learning regularly and effectively, and to provide constructive feedback to learners. This is often referred to as 'assessment for learning'.

Activity 1: Why assess? (1 hr-1 hr, 15 mins)

Facilitator notes

This first session is preparatory, which enables participants to look again at why we assess learners and learning and some of the terminology used in such assessment. The focus of the session is on formative assessment, that is examining methods of giving regular, constructive feedback to learners during their learning sessions.

PowerPoint slides

The objectives for this activity are on Slide 3.

Slide 4 provides a definition of differentiation as a reminder, if needed.

Slide 5 shows how participants should set out their flipcharts for Stage 2 of this activity.

If time is short (or if participants are more experienced) you may prefer to dispense with the activity and simply use PowerPoint Slides

6-8 to set the scene, put over the main points and stimulate discussion before going straight into Activity 2.

Slide 9 can be used to lead into Activity 2.

Consider how you want to group participants: having mixed groups of teachers or trainers from different curriculum areas can provide a richer discussion, but each task may take longer.

Now read the activity.

Objectives

- To identify the main reasons why we assess learners and learning.
- To reach a better understanding of terms used to describe forms of assessment.
- To explore how different methods of assessment can be used to identify and/or address individual learners' needs.

Resources

PowerPoint Slides 3-9

Three different coloured sets of sticky notes (green, pink and blue)

Pens that are easily readable when used on sticky notes

Flipchart paper

White or blue tack

Glossary of assessment terms

Stage 1 (individually) (5-10 mins)

- Wordstorm as many reasons as you can think of why we assess learners and learning.
- Write each one down on a separate green sticky note as you go – don't worry about repetition or overlap at this point.

Facilitator notes

It's important that participants use a separate sticky note for each reason. At the end of Stage 2 you should allow a short time for participants to view the different flipcharts if appropriate.

Stage 2 (move into fours) (20 mins)

- Compare sticky notes and add any further reasons for assessment you can think of.
- Discuss your findings and place your sticky notes into groups of broadly similar purposes for assessment.
- For each group of sticky notes discuss and agree a set of words that describes the overall main purpose for assessment and write these on a pink sticky note. Be as concise as possible.
- Stick each pink sticky note on a piece of flipchart paper with the associated green sticky notes under the relevant pink one.
- One participant from each group should pin up your flipchart and read out your pink sticky notes.
- Discuss areas of similarity and difference.

Facilitator notes















The task that follows can be optional. The purpose of it is to clarify terminology, which may vary depending on the curriculum area or type of provision (for example, terminology in work-based learning may differ from that in adult and community learning, prisons and schools.) It's important not to allow participants to digress from the main activity.

Stage 3 (in the same fours) (10-15 mins)

- Consider again the reasons on your pink sticky notes and come up with as many terms as you can for assessment methods that you associate with each of the reasons.
- Note each of these terms on a blue sticky note.
- Stick the blue sticky notes alongside the appropriate group of pink and green ones on your flipchart paper.

Facilitator note

Participants' flipchart paper should look something like the one on the next page.

Reasons for assessment	Assessment terms
	
 	
	
	
 	
 	
and so on...	

Stage 4 (whole group) (10 mins)

- Circulate and look at all the terms on the blue sticky notes.
- Note those that are not clear to you.

The facilitator then gives a brief PowerPoint presentation summing up key aspects of this activity and referring to a sheet listing terms associated with assessment.

Facilitator notes

Participants will come up with a range of purposes for assessment. Their wording on the pink sticky notes will probably relate broadly to initial assessment, formative assessment and summative assessment. PowerPoint Slides 6-8 can be used to sum up this exercise. The slides give a broad overview of the different types of assessment, when they are used and for what purpose, and some of the associated terms.

Slide 9 highlights formative assessment and leads into the next activity on this aspect of assessment. The wording in italic type on the slide indicates the focus for the activities that follow. Allow five to ten minutes to present the slides.

It can be easy to get drawn into lengthy discussions about terminology, for example: 'What is the difference between initial and diagnostic assessment?' In these cases you should refer participants to the sheet listing terms associated with assessment and then move on.

The activities that follow in Activity 2 are about formative assessment. They look at methods of giving regular, constructive feedback to learners during their learning sessions. They do not deal with one-to-one reviews which are a type of formative assessment.

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PARTICIPANTS' BRIEFING SHEET

Activity 1: Why assess? (1 hr-1 hr,15 mins)

Objectives

- To identify the main reasons why we assess learners and learning.
- To reach a better understanding of terms used to describe forms of assessment.
- To explore how different methods of assessment can be used to identify and/or address individual learners' needs.

Resources

Three different coloured sets of sticky notes (green, pink and blue)

Pens that are easily readable when used on sticky notes

Flipchart paper

White or blue tack

Glossary of assessment terms

Stage 1 (individually) (5-10 mins)

- Wordstorm as many reasons as you can think of why we assess learners and learning.
- Write each one on a separate green sticky note as you go – don't worry about repetition or overlap at this point.

Stage 2 (move into fours) (20 mins)

- Compare sticky notes and add any further reasons for assessment you can think of.
- Now discuss your findings and place your

sticky notes into groups of broadly similar purposes for assessment.

- For each group of sticky notes discuss and agree a set of words that describes the overall main purpose for assessment and write these on a pink sticky note. Be as concise as possible.
- Stick each pink sticky note on a piece of flipchart paper with the associated green sticky notes under the relevant pink one.
- One participant from each group should pin up your flipchart and read out your pink sticky notes.
- Discuss areas of similarity and difference.

Stage 3 (in the same fours) (10-15 mins)

- Consider again the reasons on your pink sticky notes and come up with as many terms as you can for assessment methods that you associate with each of the reasons.
- Note each term on a blue sticky note.
- Stick the blue sticky notes alongside the appropriate group of pink and green ones on your flipchart paper.

Stage 4 (whole group) (15 mins)

- Circulate and look at all the terms on the blue sticky notes.
- Note those that are not clear to you.

The facilitator will then give a brief PowerPoint presentation summing up key aspects of this activity and referring to a sheet listing the terms associated with assessment.

TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH ASSESSMENT

1. Initial assessment (generic)

The overall process of assessing individual learners' needs, abilities, aptitudes, preferences and prior learning in order to plan and provide an appropriate learning programme to meet their needs.

Initial assessment in relation to basic skills, literacy and numeracy

Screening

A process, often informal, that indicates the likelihood that an adult may have a literacy, language or numeracy skills need. Does not relate the adult's skills to any particular 'level'. Adults may decide, after screening, to ask for an 'initial assessment'.⁸

Initial assessment

Initial assessment gives the teachers or trainers early warning signs that someone has poor basic skills. It helps teachers and trainers position learners against the National Standards for Adult Literacy and Numeracy so that an appropriate learning programme can be identified.⁹

Diagnostic assessment

Diagnostic assessment builds on initial assessment, to provide more in-depth information about an individual's strengths and weaknesses, enabling teachers and trainers to design a programme of work suited to the needs of the individual learner.⁹

Learning styles inventory

A diagnostic instrument used to assess learners' preferred learning styles.

Vocational aptitude tests

A diagnostic instrument used to assess learners' aptitude for a particular vocational or job-related area.

2. Formative assessment/assessment for learning

Regular checking of individual learners' progress throughout their programme, within and outside teaching and learning sessions, and followed by feedback.

Individual review, action planning and target setting

A type of formative assessment that takes place outside the classroom where learners review their individual progress and identify actions for improvement with timescales.

3. Summative assessment

An end test or assessment, usually given at the end of a unit, module or programme, to record a learner's attainment for that particular unit of learning. Aggregated data may be used for management accountability purposes.

⁸From 'A professional guide for frontline staff providing IAG in support of Skills for life', the Learning and Skills Council.

⁹The Basic Skills Agency – www.basic-skills.co.uk

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FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

Activity 2: Exploring formative assessment and feedback (1 hr, 15 mins)

Facilitator notes

This activity focuses on formative assessment and 'feedback'. Before doing this activity participants should already have explored the different purposes of assessment or been introduced to them. The purpose of formative assessment should have been established. A suggested definition, which can be found in the glossary of terms, is:

Regular checking of individual learners' progress throughout their programme, within and outside teaching and learning sessions, followed by constructive feedback.

PowerPoint slides

PowerPoint Slide 10 shows the objectives for this session.

Slide 11 shows the definition above.

Slide 12 can be used as a reminder of the importance of formative assessment and feedback for both the learner and the teacher or trainer, and as a link to the previous activity.

Now read the activity.

Objectives

- To understand the value of formative assessment and feedback.
- To explore the formative assessment and

feedback methods you use and to evaluate their advantages and limitations.

Resources

PowerPoint Slides 10-18

A grid on which participants record their responses to the activity.

Facilitator notes

PowerPoint Slides 13 to 15 refer to research findings and can be used before embarking on the activity to introduce the importance of constructive feedback as part of formative assessment. Alternatively, you may prefer participants to do the first stage of the task and then show the slides and make links or emphasise emerging messages.

The slide about grading may lead to a lot of discussion. Some participants may defend an element of competition and say it motivates their learners. It's important not to be drawn into over-lengthy discussions. Participants will have to use their judgement on this, taking account of their particular learners. A compromise may well be possible. Don't forget, too, that we're looking at formative not summative assessment where, clearly, grading is required.

It's important to come back to the value of feedback and to emphasise this before proceeding with the activity.

Allow 10-15 minutes for presentation and discussion of slides.

The activity is in three stages. Organise participants in groups of three or four. The composition of the groups is not critical but if you have teachers or trainers from different curriculum areas it could be beneficial to mix them as they may have different approaches to formative assessment which they can compare.

Hand out a blank grid to each participant but ask one member of each group to be responsible for an agreed group version and for feeding back to the main group. Go through the instructions for the first stage with participants.

Stage 1 (in groups of three or four) (20 mins in groups) (15-20 mins for feedback and discussion)

- Identify and list the different methods you use to check understanding and learning in a session.
- What do you think are the advantages and limitations of each? Consider, in particular, the extent to which each method enables you to assess the progress of all learners.
- Record these on the grid you have been given, leaving the final column blank.
- One person from each group should feed back to the main group.

Facilitator notes

To manage the feedback, ask each group to present one method at a time, in turn. As facilitator, you can check where other groups have identified the same or a similar method and thereby avoid repetition. You may want to ask groups to display their grids and allow time for viewing.

In the discussion time you may want to look at:

- the range of methods identified;
- similarities and differences between

curriculum areas;

- those that are most commonly used;
- any new or unusual methods;
- when you might use the different methods and why.

Draw together any key messages.

Introduce Stage 2 of the activity. You may want to use PowerPoint Slide 16 to do this. As participants complete the final column they may find they want to enter more than one response. For example, a short computer-generated test will be both 'computer-based' and 'self-assessment'.

Stage 2 (in groups of three or four) (15 mins in small groups)

- Look again at the methods you have recorded on your chart.
- For each method note down in the 'Who/how?' column whether it's:
 - teacher or trainer-led assessment;
 - self-assessment;
 - peer-assessment;
 - computer-based assessment.
- Discuss the extent to which the methods are teacher or trainer-led and whether a wider range of approaches could have been used or existing methods could have been adapted.
- Agree two or three changes you could make to how you check learning and feed these back to the whole group. These may be new methods you would adopt or adaptations to methods you currently use.

Stage 3 (as a whole group) (15 mins)

Ask a representative from each group to feedback one change they've agreed.

Facilitator notes

Your role is to facilitate the feedback and discussion. Participants often conclude that the methods they currently use to check learning

and give constructive feedback are satisfactory. They can in fact be adapted to make learners more reflective and involved in the process.

By the end of this whole activity participants should be thinking about the following:

- the importance of checking learning and feeding back to learners regularly during sessions;
- the contribution constructive feedback makes to learners' progress;
- how feedback can help teachers or trainers to reflect on and adjust their teaching to meet learners' needs;
- the range of different methods of assessing learning – and the fact that these do not all need to be teacher or trainer-led;
- which methods best help you to meet the individual needs of learners.

These key points are shown on Slide 17 and you can spend five minutes using this summary if you wish. Slide 18 shows where feedback is referred to in the Common Inspection Framework. It may be useful to make the link if participants are approaching inspection.

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PARTICIPANTS' BRIEFING SHEET

Activity 2: Exploring formative assessment and feedback (1 hr, 15mins)

Objectives

- To understand the value of formative assessment and feedback.
- To explore the formative assessment and feedback methods you use and evaluate their advantages and limitations.

Resources

A grid on which participants record their responses to the activity.

Stage 1 (in groups of three or four) (20 mins in groups) (15-20 mins for feedback and discussion)

- Identify and list the different methods you use to check understanding and learning in a session.
- What do you think are the advantages and limitations of each? Consider, in particular, the extent to which each method enables you to assess the progress of all learners.
- Record these on the grid you've been given, leaving the final column blank.
- One person from each group should feed back to the main group.

Stage 2 (in groups of three or four) (15 mins in small groups)

- Look again at the methods you've recorded on your chart.
- For each method note down in the 'Who/how?' column whether it's:
 - teacher or trainer-led assessment;
 - self-assessment;
 - peer-assessment;
 - computer-based assessment.
- Discuss the extent to which the methods are teacher or trainer-led and whether a wider range of approaches could have been used or existing methods could have been adapted.
- Agree two or three changes you could make to how you check learning and feed these back to the whole group. These may be new methods you would adopt or adaptations to methods you currently use.

Stage 3 (as a whole group) (15 mins)

Choose one representative to feed back to the whole group one change you've agreed.

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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.

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PARTICIPANTS' BRIEFING SHEET

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

Objective

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

Resources

Checking learning evaluation sheet

Checking learning resource sheet

Example of a 'memory matrix' 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've completed so that they can work in pairs on these.

Stage 1 (in fours) (25 mins)

- Look at the checking learning evaluation sheet.
- Discuss each of the methods of checking learning shown in the left-hand column. If they're 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;
- suitability for certain types of learner.

Stage 3 (in pairs) (45 mins)

- Review the session plans you have 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 are 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 or trainer-led, self-assessment, peer assessment or computer-based assessment.
- Feed back to the main group one or two developments you've made.

TOPIC 4: CHECKING LEARNING EVALUATION SHEET

	Evaluate the usefulness of each technique against the criteria below by grading it:						
	A very good	B OK	C not good				
Methods of checking learning: Remember – telling is not teaching and listening is not necessarily learning. Teachers or trainers can adapt their approaches through checking learning and getting feedback. Effective checking for learning enables learners to be active in the process, to synthesise learning, to retain and integrate material and to develop higher-level thinking.	Good for making regular checks on all learners' learning and progress	Good for checking learning at end of activity	Good for end of session to ascertain whole-group understanding and progress and help you plan your approaches for next session	Good for giving immediate feedback to learners	Good for giving deferred feedback to learners	Other measure (please identify)	Do you use this technique: 1 often 2 sometimes 3 never?
Assertive questioning							
Pair checking							
Q & A - volunteers answer							
Q & A - nominees answer							
Background knowledge probe							
Form a question							
Empty outlines							
Focused listing							
Memory matrix							
Hand signals/cue cards							
One-word/phrase/sentence recap							
Direct paraphrasing							
Application cards							
Minute paper							
Buzz groups - volunteers answer							
Buzz groups - nominees answer							
Observation of activity, e.g. group work, skill demonstration, role-play							
Multiple choice short test/quiz							
Short answer test/quiz							
Self-assessment strategies							
One-to-one review or tutorial							

There may be other techniques you want to note that have emerged from Activity 2 or you may want to add your own techniques on the next page.

CHECKING LEARNING EVALUATION SHEET

Evaluate the usefulness of each technique against the criteria below by grading it: A very good B OK C not good						
Methods of checking learning: Add below other techniques you have used and then evaluate them		Good for making regular checks on all learners' learning and progress		Good for checking learning at end of activity		Good for end of session to ascertain whole-group understanding and progress and help you plan your approaches for next session
				Good for giving immediate feedback to learners		Good for giving deferred feedback to learners
				Other measure (please identify)		
				Do you use this technique:		
				1: often 2: sometimes 3: never?		

TOPIC 4: CHECKING LEARNING RESOURCE SHEET

Assertive questioning

Groups work on thought-provoking question. Teacher or trainer asks individuals to give their group's answer, and then asks the rest of the group to discuss and agree a 'group answer'. Only then does the teacher or trainer 'give away' the right answer.

Pair checking

Teacher or trainer asks a question, then learners work alone to answer it. Pairs then compare their answers, giving their partner one good point and one way their answer could be improved. The teacher or trainer then gives the correct answer.

Q & A: volunteers answer

Learners volunteer to answer questions posed by teacher or trainer/peers.

Q & A: nominees answer

Learners are nominated by the teacher or trainer to answer questions, sometimes known as 'tagged questioning'. Learners are named after the question has been posed, thereby encouraging the whole group to consider possible answers.

Background-knowledge probe

Short, simple questionnaire given before introducing new unit/material/topic. Learners invited to respond. Provides a preview of what's to come and a review of what may already be known. Can be used as pre- and post-assessment activity: before, to find out baseline knowledge level; after, to get a rough sense of how much and how well material has been learned.

Form a question

Learners are asked to form questions based on the session input to check one another's learning. This can also be done by using a computer-based package.

Empty outlines

Teacher or trainer provides learners with an empty or partially completed outline of an in-group activity/presentation or homework exercise and gives limited amount of time to fill in the blank spaces.

Focused listing

Learners are asked to focus attention on a single important term, name or concept from a session. Learners are then directed to list several ideas that are closely related to that 'focus point'.

Memory matrix

Learners are invited to complete the blank cells of a two-dimensional diagram: a rectangle divided into rows and columns and used to organise information and illustrate relationships. Row and column headings are given, but the cells are left empty. (See the example and try it out.)

Hand signals/cue cards

Learners are asked to offer responses to questions posed by teacher, trainer or peer: Yes/No, True/False, 1 - 5 on small cards/sticky notes simultaneously. Teacher or trainer can gain overview, which can be shared with learners.

One-word /phrase/sentence recap

Learners are asked to write down new aspect(s) of learning from session on sticky notes, card or A5 paper.

Direct paraphrasing

Learners are asked to write a lay person's 'translation' of a concept learned and gear it to a specific audience.

Application cards

Learners are asked to suggest other application(s) of the principle/theory/procedure that has been explored in group.

Minute paper

Three or four minutes before the end of the session, or stage in the session, learners are asked to write a short (timed), focused response to a carefully worded prompt, e.g.

'What was the most important thing you learned about X?'

'What new aspect of Y did you learn today?'

'What was the most surprising thing you learned today?'

'What point remains least clear to you?'

Buzz groups - volunteers answer

Learners work in small groups to answer a thought-provoking question. Teacher or trainer asks each group in turn to contribute part of the answer. A volunteer answers for each group.

Buzz groups - nominees answer

As above, but after the discussion the teacher or trainer nominates the learner in each group who will contribute that group's answer(s). This ensures that all focus on the task and all consider how to articulate response(s).

Observation of activity

Teacher or trainer observes and listens to an activity undertaken by learners. It's important that the teacher or trainer assesses their performance against specific criteria, whether this be formally or informally.

Multiple-choice short test/quiz

There are several variations on this method of checking learning. Tests/quizzes can be multiple choice, require yes/no answers, be scored or not. They can be paper-based or computer-based. Computer-based assessments can offer built-in feedback to the learner in various ways.

Short answer test/quiz

This is probably one of the most familiar and commonly used methods of checking learning. It can be very effective, provided that learners receive prompt feedback.

Self-assessment strategies

Many of the above methods lend themselves to self-assessment and don't necessarily need to be teacher or trainer-led.

One-to-one review or tutorial

This provides a much more focused opportunity to check an individual learner's progress and agree actions and targets for improvement.

Some of these techniques may be new to you. If you try them, don't expect consistent success initially but do persevere. Choose a group you feel confident with.

Explain the purpose of the activity. You should feed back to the group what you learn from the strategy and how you'll use the information.

Try the techniques with different groups of learners to compare responses and hone your skills.

TOPIC 4: MEMORY MATRIX

Example of a memory matrix to use for checking learners' recall of definitions and strategies relating to assessment

Assessment definitions and techniques	Assessment purpose		
	Initial	Formative	Summative
An end test or assessment, usually at the end of a unit, module or programme, to record a learner's attainment for that particular unit of learning. Aggregated data may be used for management accountability purposes			
Pair checking			
Observation of activity, e.g. group work, skill demonstration, presentation, role-play, case study			
The overall process of assessing individual learners' needs, abilities, aptitudes, preferences and prior learning in order to plan and provide an appropriate learning programme to meet their needs			
Assertive questioning			
Learning styles inventory			
Regular checking of individual learners' progress throughout their programme, within and outside teaching and learning sessions, followed by feedback			
Screening			
Short answer test			
End of unit test			
Self-assessment strategies			
Assessment for learning			

See next page for suggested answers.

TOPIC 4 MEMORY MATRIX: ANSWER SHEET

Example of a completed memory matrix used for checking learners' recall of definitions and strategies relating to assessment

Assessment definitions and techniques	Assessment purpose		
	Initial	Formative	Summative
An end test or assessment, usually at the end of a unit, module or programme, to record a learner's attainment for that particular unit of learning. Aggregated data may be used for management accountability purposes			✓
Pair checking		✓	
Observation of activity, e.g. group work, skill demonstration, presentation, role-play, case study		✓	
The overall process of assessing individual learners' needs, abilities, aptitudes, preferences and prior learning in order to plan and provide an appropriate learning programme to meet their needs	✓		
Assertive questioning		✓	
Learning styles inventory	✓		
Regular checking of individual learners' progress throughout their programme, within and outside teaching and learning sessions, followed by feedback		✓	
Screening	✓		
Short answer test		✓	✓
End of unit test			✓
Self-assessment techniques	✓	✓	
Assessment for learning		✓	

Teacher's or trainer's name			
Date	Course	Subject/unit	Room
Time	Topic		Group size
Context of session			
Learning outcomes – by the end of the session the learner/s should be able to:		In the first column below note the checking/assessment strategies you'll be using. In the second column enter TL (teacher-or trainer-led), SA (self-assessment), PA (peer/group assessment), or CB (computer-based assessment).	
Teaching and learning methods and resources planned – tick as applicable			
<input type="checkbox"/> Whole-group teaching	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Using white board/flipchart	
<input type="checkbox"/> Coaching and instruction	<input type="checkbox"/> Wordstorm or thought shower	<input type="checkbox"/> Using an OHP	
<input type="checkbox"/> Working in pairs/small groups	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/> Using video or TV	
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual project work	<input type="checkbox"/> Practical exercises	<input type="checkbox"/> Using computers or IT	
<input type="checkbox"/> Role-playing exercises	<input type="checkbox"/> Practical demonstrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Using radio/audio tapes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Case study	<input type="checkbox"/> Dictating notes to the group	<input type="checkbox"/> Using the Internet	
<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Copying notes from board/OHP	<input type="checkbox"/> Using PowerPoint	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)			

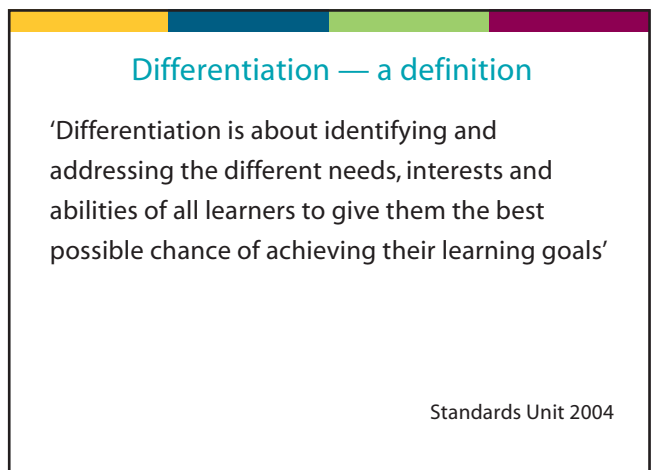
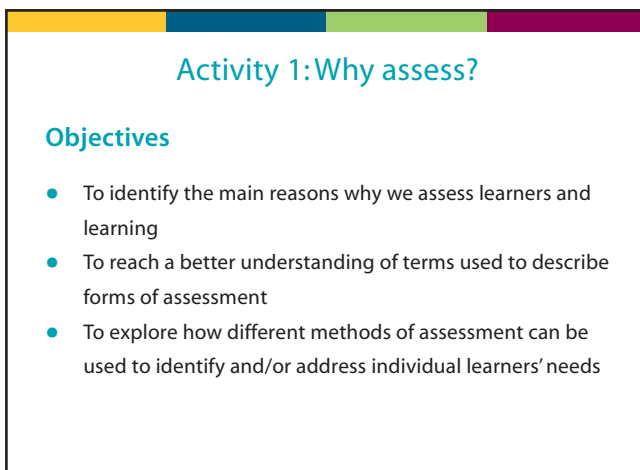
Key/basic skills to be addressed	Wider key skills to be addressed
Communication/literacy	
Number/numeracy	
Information technology	
Generic issues to be addressed: NB Where an issue is not being addressed in this session, put 'NA'	
Health and safety	Differentiation (addressing all learner needs)
Equality and diversity (awareness of stereotyping and appropriateness of materials)	ILT in the curriculum
Evaluation of session – to be completed at the end of each session	

SESSION PLAN (CONT.)

SESSION PLAN

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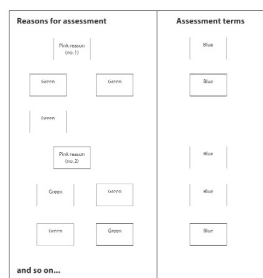
Topic 4 PowerPoint slides: Differentiation by assessment



Topic 4 PowerPoint slides: Differentiation by assessment

Activity 1: Why assess?

Participants' flip chart paper should look something like this:



Why assess?

To identify individual learners' needs, abilities, interests, preferences and prior learning so that appropriate choices can be made and individual support provided if necessary

- Screening
- Initial assessment
- Diagnostic assessment
- Learning styles inventory
- Vocational aptitude tests

Why assess?

To assess learners' progress in order to:

- feed back to the learner and agree actions to help him/her improve
- enable the teacher or trainer to adapt his/her methods if appropriate
 - Formative assessment
 - Assessment for learning
 - Individual review, action planning, target setting

Why assess?

To assess and record learner attainment:

- for learner's own record
- as evidence for progression to further study or employment
- Summative assessment e.g.
 - phase tests
 - end of unit/module assessment
 - end of course/programme assessment

NB: Tests may allow for different levels of attainment through differentiated questions/papers, or through grading.

Topic 4 PowerPoint slides: Differentiation by assessment

Differentiation by assessment: a summary

- Initial assessment
- Formative assessment (checking) of individual learning/progress accompanied/followed by constructive feedback:
 - in-session
 - as part of individual review, action planning and target setting
- Summative assessment tasks with levels, extensions and grading

Activity 2: Exploring formative assessment and feedback

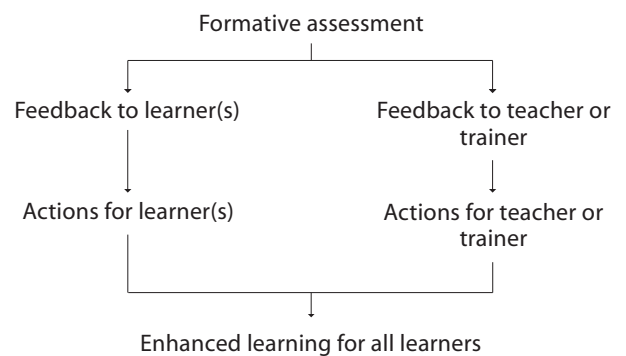
Objectives

- To understand the value of formative assessment and feedback
- To explore the formative assessment and feedback methods you use and to evaluate their advantages and limitations

Formative assessment

Regular checking of individual learners' progress throughout their programme, within and outside teaching and learning sessions, followed by constructive feedback

Checking learning and giving feedback



Topic 4 PowerPoint slides: Differentiation by assessment

Giving feedback

Professor John Hattie statistically combined the results of 200,000 experiments in classrooms and published a table listing the most effective teaching strategies in order of effectiveness.

Giving learners feedback on their learning errors and omissions, and getting them to correct them or work towards improvement of future work, had a significant impact on their learning.

'Focus on Hattie's research', LSDA, Quality Matters, June 2002

Giving feedback

Black and Wiliam's research:

- Culture of success, a belief that all can achieve: ability is incremental rather than fixed
- Clear understanding of what is wrong, what must be done to put it right
- Avoid reference to ability, competition, comparison with others
- Give a medal and mission, identify gaps, find fault and fix it

Note: Students often don't understand what they are meant to be doing and how it is assessed

Black PJ and Wiliam D, 'Assessment and classroom learning', in *Assessment in education: principles, policy and practice*, 1998

Giving feedback

Butler's research

One-third given comments	Performance improved by 33%
One-third grades only	Performance declined significantly
One-third grades and comments	Performance declined

In the case of low achievers, interest was undermined by grading with or without comments

Butler, 1988

Assessing/checking learning

- Teacher- or trainer-led assessment
- Self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- Computer-based assessment

Topic 4 PowerPoint slides: Differentiation by assessment

Summary of key points

- The importance of checking learning and feeding back to learners regularly during sessions
- The contribution feedback makes to learners' progress
- How feedback can help teachers or trainers to reflect on and adjust their teaching to meet the learners' needs
- The range of different methods of assessing learning and that these do not all need to be teacher-led
- Which methods best help you to meet the individual needs of learners

Giving feedback and the Common Inspection Framework

...consider the extent to which all learners:

- *understand and are confident in what they are doing, how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve*

Key question 2: How effective are teaching, training and learning?

... consider the extent to which, for all learners:

- *assessment is used to monitor progress and inform individual learners about how they are performing and how they might develop further*

Key question 4: How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress?

Activity 3: Applying formative assessment methods

Objective

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

