

# PLANNING & DESIGNING ASSESSMENT

Assessment is not simply a process of checking what learners have learnt but rather a powerful means of directing teaching and improving learning in the classroom. In planning a learning topic or unit, the teacher needs to integrate their assessment strategy with their teaching or lesson plan to maximise the development of understanding in their learners.

## Methods of Assessment

The **methods of assessment** refers to how the assessment task is structured for completion and assessment.

There are two components to this:

- how the task is completed; and
- how the task is assessed.

### How the task is completed –

- **By individual learners –**

If the task is completed by each individual learner then each learner produces their own evidence of learning for assessment. There is no collaboration between learners and each learner is responsible for their own work.

- **By a pair of learners –**

If the task is completed by a pair of learners then the responsibilities of the work are shared. There is some collaboration required and each learner is responsible for their contribution to the completed task as well as the completed work as a whole. Paired learners can provide effective peer-to-peer tutoring if carefully monitored by the teacher.

- **By a group of learners –**

In this case, small groups of three to six learners work on an assessment task. Each group member is accountable for his or her own learning and contribution to the group project. These groups work effectively when all member cooperate with each other to complete the task and learners learn from each other.

### How the task is assessed –

- **By the teacher – Teacher Assessment –**

The teacher is the traditional assessor in most classrooms but there are a number of different ways in which the teacher can act in this role:

- the teacher assesses each individual learner's response to the assessment task and collects their scores
- the teacher assesses each individual member's contribution to the task and collects that individual score for each learner
- the teacher scores each individual member's contribution to the task and these scores are added together and the same total is allocated to all members of the pair or group
- the teacher scores the evidence of the task produced by a pair of learners or a group of learners and allocates that same score to each member of the pair or group that produced the work
- the teacher scores the evidence of the task produced by a pair or a group of learners, multiplies that total by the number of learners in the group and gives that total score back to the members of the group for negotiation and re-allocation (includes peer assessment)

## **2. By the individual learner – Self Assessment –**

Self-assessment gives learners a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning. Self-assessment can take a number of forms:

- the learner assesses their own individual performance on a task. This may be used to develop self-assessment skills by comparing it with a teacher assessment of the same task
- the learner assesses their own contribution in a group activity. This can be used to focus a learner on their participation in the group, their contributions and collaborative efforts. It can also be used to improve self-assessment skills by comparing it with peer assessment by the other group members

## **3. By Peers – Peer Assessment –**

Peer assessment is used when learners work in pairs or small groups on cooperative tasks. Peer-assessment involves each learner in the group scoring their fellow members and can take a number of different forms:

- each member of the group scores the whole group and all members receive the average score from these
- each member scores the other members' contributions to the group and each member receives the average of these individual scores
- the teacher scores the completed product or performance and provides feedback to the group on the strengths and weaknesses of what they produced. This score is multiplied by the number of members in the group and the total score is distributed amongst the members of the group. Each learner has to justify their own contribution and negotiate their share of the score

#### **4. By the Group – Group Assessment –**

Group assessment can be used when learners work individually, in pairs or in groups. The score for each learner is decided by the group and it can take a number of forms:

- each learner presents their work to the group and the score is decided on by the group either by averaging all the individual scores or by consensus. Hand held score-cards (or electronic clicker systems) can simplify the process in the case of the latter
- each pair or small group of learners presents their work to the class group and the score is decided on by the class group either by averaging all the individual scores or by consensus. Hand-held score cards (or electronic clicker systems) can simplify the process in the case of the latter

When using pairings or groups of learners in learning and assessment activities it is important that there is a particular purpose in this. Working with a partner or in a group rather than individually must be justifiable as an optimal practice and should encompass a chosen learning target. Pairing and groups can be randomly composed or chosen by the learners or chosen by the teacher using criteria such as knowledge-based (mixed), ability (same or mixed), or interests (same, complementary or diverse). Again, the choice of group composition should be by design to accomplish a particular learning and/or assessment goal.