

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.

SETTING LEARNING TARGETS

The starting point of designing any assessment strategy is to identify the learning targets.

A learning target is defined as a description of performance that includes what learners should know and be able to do and includes some aspects of the criteria to be used to judge the performance.

The clarity of the learning targets determines the success of assessment - clear, specific and valued learning targets are essential for effective classroom assessment.

As a rough guideline, a teacher should select about 1 to 3 learning targets per lesson, 8 to 12 learning targets per unit or topic and 40 to 60 learning targets per year.

There are five different types of learning targets.

1. Knowledge (& Simple Understanding) Learning Targets

This learning target focuses on what the learner knows and simply understands.

All learning in a subject is built on a basic foundation of knowledge. This knowing may be demonstrated through recall of facts or through simple understanding of information. Simple understanding refers to the ability to make sense out of something.

The factual knowledge is the basic elements of the subject – the terminology, the symbols and signs; and their details – events, locations, dates, persons and sources of information.

The verbs that can identify it are:

- remember;
- recall;
- recognise;
- identify;

- retrieve;
- name;
- select;
- state;
- define

Simple understanding is lower-order thinking skills of comprehension and application. It involves knowing the inter-relationships between the basic elements that enables them to function together e.g. classifications; categories; principles; generalisations; theories, models and structures.

The verbs that can identify it are:

- illustrate;
- represent;
- translate;
- select;
- conduct;
- use;
- classify;
- distinguish;
- compare;
- contrast;
- summarise;
- explain

The teacher needs to clearly define what specific knowledge he or she wants the learner to acquire.

2. Reasoning (& Deep Understanding) Learning Targets

This learning target focuses on how the learner uses what they know and understand to creatively solve problems in new and novel situations.

Reasoning is the mental manipulation of knowledge. It is the use of knowledge to engage in creative and critical thinking. Deep understanding refers to a further degree of understanding whereby knowledge or information can be used in new ways to explain relationships and in problem-solving. It involves higher-order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Identifying verbs are:

- compare;
- relate;
- analyse;
- differentiate;
- organise;
- attribute;
- discriminate;

- distinguish;
- deconstruct;
- create;
- infer;
- interpret;
- deduce;
- develop;
- synthesise;
- justify;
- evaluate

3. Skills Learning Targets

This learning target focuses on what the learner can do, demonstrate or perform.

It is concerned with capacity to perform or use strategies within the subject. These can be subject or field-specific skills, communication skills, presentation skills and psychomotor skills. General learner performance of reading, writing, speaking, listening, fine-motor skills, gross motor actions, complex athletic skills are common to all subjects but each subject also has a set of specific skills needed to execute required activities in that subject

4. Product Learning Targets

This learning target focuses on the physical evidence of learning that the learner produces.

Product learning targets are completed works which have been developed by the learner e.g. artworks, papers, reports, essays, posters, projects, portfolios, models and videos. These targets emphasise the ability of the learner to use their skills to create tangible products which exist independently of their performance as the producer and providing concrete evidence of their proficiency.

5. Affective Learning Targets

This learning target focuses on the affective domain – the attitudes, values, interests, feelings, motivation, academic self-concepts and citizenship that exists in the classroom.

These contribute to individual self-esteem and affect group and interpersonal relationships that create the classroom environment. Positive affective learning targets create purposeful engagement to learn and are essential in creating an environment for successful teaching and learning.