

# [Certificate in teaching in the lifelong learning sector essay sample](https://assignbuster.com/certificate-in-teaching-in-the-lifelong-learning-sector-essay-sample/)

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Introduction

This assessment forms part of Unit 3, Principles and Practice of Assessment in the Lifelong Learning Sector. I have produced this rationale concentrating on areas of research that play a vital part when determining types and methods of assessment. I have looked at each area in turn; principles of assessment, peer and self-assessment, feedback, questioning and types of assessment records, then compared each area with research and my own experiences.

Principles of assessment

Within the learning environment confirmation of what has been has taught is extremely important, to achieve this we use many methods and forms of assessment.

“ Assessment is the process by which evidence of student achievement is obtained and judged. Ecclestone (1996) points out that assessment requires two things: evidence and a standard scale. Gray et al. 2005: 50

As a teacher/ tutor you need to know not only that learning has taken place, but also that the learning is at a level which meets all the criteria of the course you are teaching. As the quote above states, you need evidence to confirm learning has taken place and also must measure it against a standard scale. The subject or subjects you are assessing may have specific types of assessment with little flexibility to deviate where others might have scope to use many types of assessment which may be more accommodating for the learner. The two types of assessment which I use are internal and external and the concepts of assessment which are commonly used in my teaching environment are Norm referencing, criterion referencing, formative and summative assessment.

Internal is exactly what it says, an internal assessment set by your own organisation marked by you or another marker. External is when an external body such as EDEXCEL, NVQ and City & Guilds etc, set the assessment and mark it using an accredited marker. Most learning providers will follow a learning strategy which ensures everything about the assessment is conducted fairly, within guidelines and is recorded correctly. All good organisations will incorporate internal and external audit to verify this. Norm referencing is when the learner will be assessed against other learners and criterion referencing is when the learner can or cannot do the task. Formative assessment is conducted during a task or assignment and gives the learner feedback and finally summative assessment which can be in the form of a written test or end of course exam.

Summative assessments or tests are a common type of assessment and measure against a set standard. The test may have model answers or as in a multi choice test a, b, c or d will denote the correct answer. I regularly use written and multi-choice tests within my teaching environment and they confirm learning against the laid out criteria of my organisation. Multi choice tests are very good for large groups and have the added bonus that the correct answer is in front of the learner. I do find that certain learners struggle with multi-choice tests as some answers are very similar and are often misinterpreted.

My use of written tests in my teaching environment confirms learning and knowledge as is mandated by my organisation however in an engineering environment it does not ensure practical competence. As practical competence is a key element in engineering, most of our engineering written tests will also be accompanied by a practical assignment (criterion referencing). The tests I conduct all need to be supervised, controlled and be conducted within designated time limits. Tests are not everyone’s cup of tea however are sometimes the only way to confirm learning.

Throughout my time in education assessment has changed and is now more continuous than it has ever been. Continual assessment (formative assessment) can assess you over the whole course and give a better assessment of your ability than a “ one off test” over a 2 hour period. Continuous assessments can also allow for observations, incorporating questions to impart knowledge where a written exam might not. Continuous assessment also has the added bonus that the student gets continual feedback to improve, even if it is positive or negative. Within my organisation some learners have approximately 6 months to complete a trade related workbook to gain the next step of their engineering qualification. This is assessed through continual assessment which incorporates feedback and areas for improvement. This form of assessment does work in our environment however some learners do need to be closely monitored to ensure progress is continuous and improving.

Peer and self assessment

Throughout the PTLLS and CTLLS course I have been impressed by the use of peer assessment and the effect it has on my learning experience. Peer assessment can be formative or summative however throughout this course has been mainly formative. Within my organisation peer assessment is rarely used and when it is, it is usually without ground rules being put in place or a briefing on how to use it. Praise from your peers instills confidence and gives you a feeling that your teaching skills are moving in the right direction. Peer assessment isn’t all positive and can have the opposite effect on some. If feedback is negative and not constructive it may have a detrimental effect on teaching. It is extremely important that all involved in peer assessment are briefed on how to conduct it and to ensure the assessments are conducted in a professional manner.

I have always had reservations about self-assessment and its use. Within the my organisation we use self-assessment for appraisals and it generally produces two results, over grading and under grading. Very rarely does it produce correct grading. Over grading can lead an individual to think they are performing very well and under grading can actually have a negative effect on an individual and their moral. This experience did sow the seeds of doubt when relating this to self-assessment in teaching. stated: –

In 1951 Carl Rogers “ Independence, creativity, and self-reliance are all facilitated when self-criticism and self-evaluation are basic and evaluation by others is of secondary importance.”

In this he is saying that to achieve independence, creativity and self-reliance you first need to experience self-criticism and self-evaluation. Evaluation by others is of secondary importance. Self-evaluation and self-assessment are in essence the same. I have used self-assessment on both PTLLS and CTLLS and have tried to apply the concepts and theories be to better my teaching ability. Self-assessment does make you reflect and check the work you have produced however there is still a subjective element to it. To alleviate the subjective element of self-assessment you can incorporate a student questionnaire which will confirm learning by the student and also confirm your own assessment of your performance.

David Kolb published his learning styles model in 1984 and acknowledged that the learning from experience cycle places heavy emphasis on self-assessment. His four stage cycle involves having a concrete experience, a reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. This can be likened to a self-assessment when an experience leads to self critique and reflection, these are then analyzed and interoperated into better procedures and then acted upon. Both self and peer assessment empower the learner and also put the onus on them to ensure they are meeting the required standards.

Another way to assess is by the use of group work (presentations, projects, practical assignments etc) which allows learners to use their own approach and theories to solve a problem. This can allow the group to develop not only their knowledge of the chosen subject but also their communication and interpersonal skills. My organization often use group work, presentations, practical assignments and projects to assess and develop learners, this also encourages teamwork and group bonding.

From my experiences in a military environment group assessment works very well however an element of control and observation needs to be applied to ensure the entire group is participating equally. In the military this method of assessment has two purposes, the first is to identify natural leaders and also identify non-team players. When trying to develop or identify leaders the assessment will have an objective but little direction or guidance to achieve the aim. In a group environment a natural leader will usually come to the fore. This activity also shows those who are less able to lead and may require development in this area.

The assessment cycle, as explained by Ann Gravels in Principles and Practice of Assessment in the Lifelong Learning Sector 2009, is a tool used to continually monitor assessment until completion or removal from the course. It involves an initial assessment, assessment planning, assessment activity, assessment decision & feedback and a review of the process before starting the cycle over again. The cycle is very similar to the teaching cycle and involves an initial assessment of the learner, negotiating assessment methods with the learner, the type of assessment activity, the results of the assessment with feedback be it positive or negative and a review which may involve the process being adapted to better suit the learner.

The cycle then starts at the beginning adapting any modifications and incorporates any lessons learned. Within my teaching environment similar methods to the above cycle of assessment are used. Initial assessment and continual monitoring and fine tuning of the assessment methods are key to the success of our learners. Having such a diverse group of learners also requires flexibility with the teacher and also the use of trial and error with every new student. Some of the methods used have strengths and weaknesses while others are driven by policy and competence related assessment.

Feedback and questioning

Part of the assessment process is giving feedback and using questioning which can contribute greatly to the assessment process. A simple question can confirm learning and also generate feedback from the learner. Once the teacher has confirmed learning and made an assessment decision, the teacher can use feedback to back brief the learner. Both positive and negative feedback are useful as long as they are constructive. I have given feedback to many learners and even the most critical feedback can be re-engineered to give the learner a sense of achievement. In my opinion this sense of achievement to the learner, even though critical, can still give them the focus and determination to progress and improve. Paul Black and Dylan William of Kings College London looked at feedback in relation to formative assessment.

What they say is feedback should be given as medals and mission with a clear objective. The medal is what the student has done well and it gives the student feedback on the exact area they have performed well on. Mission is the information the student needs to get better, improve or to make the transition to the next level. Feedback for this must have a positive slant and or be forward looking. Medals and Missions used in conjunction with clear goals allow the learner to know what is expected and what they require to strive for. This theory can be easily related to my organizational environment and applied to all learning fields. The concept is very close to how the student would tackle a task (learning or military) and they would also know/ understand that feedback and goals need to be clear and concise to have effect.

Types of assessment records

Within my current teaching environment many forms of assessment records are kept and stored for internal and external verification. Students are expected to pass all aspects of mandatory training annually, to maintain competence and also to be able to perform effectively in and out of the working environment. All training is recorded through our planning & training department and records are kept stating when the training was conducted, who carried out the training and copies of any assessments involved. All results are uploaded onto the establishment’s website to allow everyone to check and monitor performance and progress of departments. To ensure the information is correct the establishment has a thorough audit process. Mandatory training is interrogated weekly and is discussed at the highest level to ensure training is not only happening but it will also be completed within the allocated timeframes. Internal audit of technical training is conducted by the workshop management team.

The team has a monthly audit checklist which includes interrogation of the website, physical checks on progress, documentation is up to date and employees are progressing as expected. The management team also speaks with line managers and their subordinates to ensure they are fully converse with the technical training process. External audit is conducted by independent teams whose sole purpose is to visit army units and check all processes relating to training are correct.

External inspection teams will use many methods to confirm we are training our employees correctly which include interviewing individuals who have recently completed training, they will proof check test papers, ask to see evidence of training in the form of paperwork and also check we are maintaining and holding records with regards to policy and legislation. At the end of the external audit the unit will be graded and the commanding officer briefed on the team’s findings. If the unit has not met all of the inspection criteria a remedial plan will be put in place and a re-inspection date agreed.

Methodology

Before I decided on how to conduct my research and which tecniques were best suited I had to decide on what kind of research should be undertaken. As a Training Manager my research had to be closely linked to my everyday working life and my experiences as an instructor, whilst keeping the Lifelong Learning Sector in mind . I conducted my research through reading many different publications obtained from my local library and also utilising the internet. During this assignment I found it extremely useful to take notes in each subject area then took time to relate my experiences, linked with the research to help me to better understand the subject as a whole.

Summary

Teachers of any subject need to have a fundamental understanding of all the areas I have researched to enable them to fully support the principles and practice of assessment in the lifelong learning sector. The learning journey is never smooth and there can be many barriers along the way, these need to be addressed and overcome by both the learner and the teacher if the goals are to be achieved, qualifications gained and ensuring all round success for the learner.

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