

Principles of assessment unit 12 pttIs essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Julie Capon Unit 012 Principles of assessment in lifelong learning The types of assessment a trainer will use in lifelong learning include initial, diagnostic, independent assessment, formative, summative, internal, external, formal and informal assessment. " Assessment is a way to find out if learning has taken place. " Tummons (2007: p5) Gravells (2011: p91), describes the assessment cycle in the following terms; " the initial assessment, assessment planning, assessment activity, assessment decision and feedback and finally, review of progress". The cycle restarts at the initial assessment with the next subject or unit of the qualification.

To ensure that there is consistency and fairness through out the assessment cycle, standards and practice of assessors must be agreed and be appropriate to the subject or course. The initial assessment could include an application form and interview for a place on a course. Tummons (2007: p13) states, " this process of selection is in itself a form of initial diagnostic assessment, that identifies the characteristics, competencies, skills or knowledge of the learner. " Appropriate initial assessment activities can also give an indication of any special assessment requirements.

Initial assessments can be a useful tool in identifying if the learner has chosen the right course or programme of study. Initial assessments also ensure that the learner is not attempting a level above their current capabilities. " Diagnostic tests can be used to ascertain information regarding maths, English or ICT. " Gravells (2011: p41). They can also be used to help compile and individual learning plan (ILP) When planning assessments, it is essential that the trainer follows the awarding bodies' guidelines and that suitable types and methods of assessment are agreed

with colleagues and learners. Assessment planning should be inclusive to all and always be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound,” (SMART) Gravells (2011: p94). Assessment activity includes the methods a trainer will use. Formal assessment methods include projects, tests, assignments, essays and informal methods may include puzzles, gapped handouts, oral questions and discussions. Assessment decisions and feedback require a trainer to make judgements with regard to the success of the learner in acquiring the information. It also includes agreeing action and target plans and giving constructive feedback as well as allowing feedback from the learner. A review of progress lets the trainer and learner review development of the new learnt skills and knowledge required by the programme or qualification. Review also permits two-way communication, giving the learner an opportunity to discuss their progress or any barriers that may be preventing the learner from completing assessments activities, meeting targets or assignments. The trainer should also use the review to make any necessary adjustments to the assessment criteria or assessment methods. The three types of assessment that are most often used in the lifelong learning sector are initial, formative and summative.

Initial assessments should take place prior to the commencement of a particular course, programme or subject. Initial assessments enable the trainer to identify any special requirements or resources necessary for the learner. Formative assessments are used continually throughout the learner’s course or programme and include activities such as puzzles, practical activities, question and answer sessions and assignments. Assessing learning during these activities gives the trainer the opportunity to

give constructive feedback. On-going assessments also help the trainer to identify if the needs of individual learners are being met.

Formative assessment enables the trainer to identify if the learners are at the appropriate levels required for any summative assessment. Gravells (2011: p95) notes however, " If you are assessing a programme whereby the activities are provided for you, for example, examinations or tests, there is often there tendency to teach purely what is required for them to achieve a pass. Teaching to pass tests or examinations does not maximise a learner's ability and potential. " Summative assessments are held at the end of the course or program and they usually use formal methods, for example examinations and multi-choice questions.

Gravells (2011) suggests that summative assessments are usually quite stressful for learners and even though the learner might be very capable under alternative assessment methods they often fail final examinations. Trainers must choose methods that most effectively assess the objectives of the course of study. If they are choosing their own methods it will depend on whether they are assessing knowledge, skills, or attitudes. The trainer must also ensure the assessment method or activity is valid. " Does the assessed task actually assess what you want it to" (OCSLD 2002).

One example of an assessment method used in lifelong learning is the recognition of prior learning (RPL). The trainer can use a skills audit to assess what has previously been learnt and produce an individual learning plan (ILP). This will enable the trainer to place the student at the correct starting point of a program of study. This can benefit the learner as they do not have

to duplicate previous work or be reassessed. The method has its limitations in that it can prove to be very time consuming to both learner and trainer trying to establish and authenticate some aspects of prior knowledge.

A fun and informal method of assessment is to use quizzes, puzzles, crosswords. These methods can prove to be a good way of assessing progress and retention of facts. The disadvantage with this method is that the trainer is unable to assess the level of understanding or if the learner has the ability to apply knowledge. These assessment methods may also appear trivial to the more mature students. Role-play is another method that can encourage participation and discussion and can be a good way to assess theory to practice.

However, role-play can be a time consuming activity and some learners may find it difficult to participate. (Gravells 2011). Other methods of formal and informal assessment are essays, case studies, assignments, examinations, projects, gapped handouts, discussions and oral and written questions. " All assessment activities should be valid, authentic, current, sufficient and reliable. " (VACSR) (Gravells 2011: p101) " There is strong evidence that involving students in the assessment process can have a very definite education benefits" (OCSLD 2002).

This involvement could include the learner completing a self-assessment sheet, marking a fictitious student's work, marking peers work and giving feedback. " The evidence is that through trying to apply criteria the student gains much greater insight into what is actually being required and subsequently their own work improves" (OCSLD 2002). Self and peer-

assessment encourages learners to check their work prior to submission. The disadvantage of self-assessment is learners may well credit themselves with levels of higher achievement.

An advantage of peer assessment is that when learners give feedback to each other it helps to promote learner involvement in the assessment process. Peer assessment however needs careful monitoring and training to ensure that positive and constructive feedback is given. The trainer must be aware of any personality clashes that may affect decision-making. Feedback plays an important role in the assessment process. When a trainer is giving feedback they must always try to use language that is clear and easy to understand. Feedback should be specific so that learners understand how they are progressing.

Learners that have not met the required assessment levels need to know why and what they can do to correct their mistakes. The trainer should always try to start with some positive feedback before moving towards competences that needs attention. It is also important that trainers treat each learner as an individual and take into account equality, diversity and any special requirements to meet the learners' needs. Records help track learners progression from the initial application forms which will include personal details such as contact numbers, addresses, disabilities and diagnostic tests through to final assessment.

Other records may include attendance records, ILPs, lesson plans, induction records and assessments. It is essential that all records regarding a learner's personal information and assessments are legible, accurate, confidential,

and secure. This is legal requirement under The Data Protection Act (1998 amended 2003). Learners also have a right under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) to see information the trainer or the organisation holds about them. For assessment recording the trainer must be aware of any external and internal awarding bodies' requirements and any regulators such as Ofsted.

When assessing a learner's work, feedback sheets must be completed with a record of the trainer's decisions. The form must detail the name of student, the date, time and place of assessment, the purpose and method of assessment and what was assessed including any follow up actions or special requirements. Gravells (2011p; 103) says " assessment records must show an audit trail of your learner's progress from commencement to completion, they are kept for a minimum of three years" It is also necessary to keep records in case of appeals against a trainers assessment decision.

Word Count: 1195 References Gravells, A (2010) Passing PTLLS Assessments. Exeter. Learning Matters Ltd. Gravells, A (2011). Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector. Exeter: Learning Matters Ltd. Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development OCSLD (2002) Oxford Brookes University Learning and Teaching Briefing Papers Series [www. brookes. ac. uk/services/ocsd/](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/) Tummons J (2007). Assessing Learning in the Lifelong Learning Sector, 2nd Ed, Exeter: Learning Matters Ltd.