

The purpose of assessment



Name: Beebee Jayboonnessa NAYECK BUSAWON 1 Describe, use and evaluate two different assessment activities used to check the learning of either individuals or a group of learners. My first assessment activity was to write a paragraph on a topic sentence which is '??? water is essential??'™.

I informed my learners of the set criteria to be considered for attempting this written test. It should be in 100 words and it was an assessment to be completed individually. The set criteria were as follows: Assessment Criteria| Mark 10| Text focus and Organisation| 3| Grammar| 2| Creative use of language| 2| Punctuation| 2| Spelling| 1| I tested the writing skills of the learners while they used their thinking skills.

The set criteria were a guide for the learners to know how they would be assessed. Assessment criteria are vitally important in attempting to achieve reliability. All the language aspects were considered for the written test and the topic chosen was the concern of our everyday life.

It reflected current issue. It was chosen to make the learners experience real life situation which is important in language teaching. The second activity was writing and reading assessment. The writing activity was to respond to a form complaining about lost luggage and the reading assessment was to match each paraphrasing to a particular article dealing with photographers.

The writing activity was a real-life situation. In language teaching real-life situation is an important element to consider as it is more functional and the learners are placed in authentic situation. It aimed at assessing the communication skills in writing for a particular purpose as well as the language structure being integrated in the same test. The reading test was

mostly to test the reading skills, more particularly, scanning and skimming skills. Authentic reading matter was set to create interest and integration of thinking and reading skills have been considered.

2 Analyse the purpose of assessment and produce a written justification of your chosen methods. Introduction Assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process on a continuous basis. It is ??? a task or a series of tasks that are set by the teacher to learn more about a learner??™s knowledge, skills and attitudes??™.

. The purpose of assessment is numerous as J. Tummons (2007) states: ??? they help me work out how well the course is going, how well you are learning and how well I am teaching.

??? We, teachers, need to understand the various purposes of assessment. To achieve the purposes of assessment, we have to use a range of different methods to get the most reliable feedback. The purpose of Assessment Assessments are carried out to collect evidence of learning and for learning, to record it and to report achievement. In this way, teachers are able to make judgments of learners??™ learning performance. It also indicates to teachers and learners that outcomes have been achieved and that new learning content can be introduced.

Based on the evidence of the assessment teachers are able to analyse student progress for the purpose of modifying and refining teaching/learning cycle to better meet students??™ needs. The evidence is also used to review curricular targets and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of modules so that they can be amended if necessary to improve the quality of learning

delivery. In other words, we conduct assessment to maximize learners' access to the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values defined in the curriculum. Assessment is regarded as an important source of motivation.

It creates learning opportunities which help learners to develop self-awareness of their learning performance. The purpose of doing an initial assessment is to assess the prior knowledge of the learners before the introduction of a new topic. Formative assessment is carried out in order to assess how much learning is taking place. Its purpose is to monitor the learner's progress as he/she works towards achieving the competence with regard to the specific learning outcomes. Further learners get the opportunity to improve their performance through feedback received from the formative assessment.

This feedback guides also the decision-making of all stakeholders of education. Summative assessment has its own purpose. That is, it provides information on how successfully the objectives for the year have been met and how well children is progressing (www. tda. gov. uk).

Assessment Methods A variety of assessment methods provide teachers with evidence of what students know and can do. But they should be valid, authentic, reliable, sufficient, current and fair. Assessment is carried out through different methods in my subject area and it must be implemented on a continuous basis.

The chosen methods must effectively assess the objectives of the learning unit. My chosen methods in the language classroom are teacher's assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, resulting in a descriptive

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statement of what a learner has achieved??? (MM Nieman et al: 2008). I use different instruments and techniques to incorporate into the assessment for my language classroom. For instance, observation, cassettes, questionnaires, written assignments, portfolios, oral presentation and debate/argument are some of the instruments which I use to collect evidence of whether learning is taking place or not with reference to set criteria. Only written assignment will not suffice to assess a learner's skills of any language because language learning involves listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Therefore to assess the oral skills of a learner in the language subject, it should be, observation, oral demonstration, debate/argument or through cassette recordings. It cannot be a written assignment to test listening and speaking skills.

It will not be valid and reliable. For instance, I can use tape recordings for a speaking assessment. It can be a self-assessment exercise. That is, learners can analyse their progress by listening to recordings of their own presentations. They can eliminate their own shortcomings, analyse their progress and also plan their own progress.

In this way they are motivated to take responsibility of their own learning. Further for the listening assessment, we have to compile a checklist with all the necessary information to conduct our observation and learners have to be aware of this checklist. This will be guidelines for learners to observe in listening assessment such as: Does the learner: * Listen attentively to others * Remember important details * Remember details in the correct sequence * Shows that he or she understands what he or she has heard To ensure that learners have mastered the above-mentioned listening skills, we have to

conduct assessment through observation. Therefore the listening assessment cannot be carried out only through written test. It should be incorporated with the other methods so as to collect reliable evidence to give feedback. Conclusion Hence the purpose of assessment is for learning, of learning and as learning. As a result our assessment methods have to be chosen accordingly to assess the objectives of the study unit.

We have noted that all assessment methods will definitely not suit all the subject areas as they will not provide valid and reliable evidence of learning.

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3 Write and reflect on (a) how your feedback has informed your learners' progress and achievement. (b) how feedback from others has informed your own professional practice.

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(a) I have given feedback on the learners' assessment tasks by starting with the positive points followed by areas which needed development and an overall feedback to reveal whether the work was according to the level. For instance, in the literacy writing test I have tried to draw their attention to what they did well by writing my comments according to the set criteria such as text coherent, paragraphs clearly organized, appropriate language use, good format, punctuation. Then I commented on areas to be developed such as to differentiate between a letter and a complaint form.

I believe, taking into account the criteria that have been set for the assessment task, I have informed my learners what they really have done well and where they need to be more attentive when attempting an assessment task. By giving them the feedback in written form I believe they are informed of their progress in a constructive and meaningful way.

(b) Feedback from others is very significant to our professional development. For instance, in my reading assessment task, my text questions came first and then, I had my text on the following page. So it was observed that the text placed before the set questions would have created much less confusion.

I could explain that some learners prefer to read questions first before reading the text itself. But certainly it is not the style of many learners. So I have to take this into account next time I am setting another reading test. Further it is true that the set criteria for the writing test were given orally. The feedback I obtained was that it would have been more constructive and meaningful if it was given in a written form. This would have helped the

learners to have a better idea on what they are being assessed for it is very easy to forget verbal guidance.

To conclude I will say that giving feedback is essential for the learners??™ progress and achievement particularly when it is constructive and meaningful. Simultaneously receiving feedback is an indispensable guide for our professional practice.