

TUTORIAL LETTER 501/3/2018

The Educator as Assessor

EDAHOD5

Semesters 1 & 2

Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

This Study Guide contains important information
about your module.

Welcome and Introduction

Dear Student

Welcome to the challenging yet rewarding world of being an educator and assessor in South Africa. In this word of welcome and introduction to the module “The Educator as Assessor”, you will find:

- background information describing the context of your study of this module
- information on studying using information technology
- details of what you can expect from this activity-driven study guide
- the learning aims or outcomes of the module
- our views on the nature of the guide as a two-way conversation
- a focus on the application of theory rather than regurgitation of information
- a note on the use of icons in this study guide
- a reminder that study time should be planned carefully
- an overview of the structure of the study guide and the module
- details of the first learning activity you have to do as an ice-breaker

Background information and context

The module, The Educator as Assessor, is offered to students enrolled for two educator development courses, namely, the Baccalaureus Education (BEd) and the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

If you are enrolled for the BEd, you are currently also studying other modules, including the subjects you intend to specialise in and teach at a school or institution, e.g. Biology, Mathematics, Language, Tourism, Life Orientation, and others. On the grounds of you having studied these subjects at second or third-year levels already, or of you being in the process of doing so, you may be regarded an expert in your field of study.

If you have enrolled in the Unisa Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) course, you have done so with the purpose of qualifying and registering to teach the subject or subjects of your choice to learners in the South African education system. Having obtained a first degree, you are already an expert in your field of study – yet you have to obtain the PGCE as a means to be registered and appointed as a professional educator.

No matter which of the above applies, the facts remain that you are not a novice student and that you have mastered the ability to study at graduate level. You have enrolled for courses presented in the distance education mode. All of this means that we expect of you to be able to work independently and with insight, rather than being spoon-fed by the lecturer, coordinator and authors who contributed to the resources of this module – including this study guide, the prescribed text or any Open Education Resource (OER) or other source that you may find and use in the course of your studies.

This module, The Educator as Assessor (EDAHOD5), forms part of the PGCE and BEd courses and is focused on developing and deepening your understanding of assessment so that you can evaluate its worth and possibly start changing the way you think about assessment and the way you apply assessment in a rapidly changing teaching and learning environment.

In this ever-changing context, this module aims not only to prepare you for being an effective and professional assessor working within the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum that was implemented in South Africa in 2012, but also to be a reflexive educator able to make sense of changes in education and assessment, irrespective of the current and/or future curriculum contexts.

Studying using information technology

Welcome also to the exciting, demanding and fast changing the world of studying in the 21st century at a distance education institution of higher learning. Whether we want to admit it or not, the era of e-learning has arrived, and the days of studying by using one source, namely the prescribed text in hard copy only, are irrevocably gone!

The world over, we are rapidly moving towards a paperless learning, teaching and working environment, simply because of the powerful nature and ever increasing effectiveness of information technology.

As you may know, Unisa embarked on the online marking of assignments in 2013 and this has already made the administration of assignments far more time and cost-effective. It also makes our feedback to you almost immediate – and much more detailed and effective – and allows the marking of assignments to be used as an opportunity for teaching and learning rather than only as an assessment of your ability.

You will also notice that we make use of Open Education Resources (OER) in addition to the prescribed text in this study guide. We expect of you to access these, as well as any other relevant resources available on the internet, to expand your learning experiences as you work through this module.

The Unisa website, as well as the myUnisa portal for current students, have made e-learning a reality for every student enrolled at our university.

In this context, it is imperative that you are computer literate and have direct and permanent access to the internet!

What to expect from this study guide

The basic approach followed in this study guide is:

- to introduce you to a wide variety of themes, topics, theories, constructs, ideas, frameworks and opinions relevant to assessment in education in general, and to assessment in South Africa in particular and,
- to assist you to reflect on (think about) assessment theory and practice, and
- to guide you in applying what you learn about these themes, topics, theories and the like to assessment planning and practice in your particular context as an educator and assessor who intends to teach and assess learners in your subject or subjects.

These three steps in our approach are presented and applied in this study guide in a series of learning activities. Learning for understanding and empowerment is an active, interactive and reflexive endeavour rather than a “read-and-regurgitate” process. The activities in the study guide are designed in such a way that doing them will facilitate your learning of the content of the module in an engaging and enjoyable manner. This, in turn, means that you can expect to be challenged to think and to work and to apply your mind at the post-graduate level when engaging in the activities presented. At the same time, you will experience learning success along the way as every activity will be a stepping stone towards achieving the aims and objectives of the module.

Obviously, the study guide will, for the larger part, follow the logic and sequence of the themes, topics, and theories as presented in the prescribed text, *The educator as assessor* (Dreyer 2013). The study guide will also supplement the prescribed text and, where appropriate, refer you to OER to expand your thinking when studying this module. Obviously, the current official curriculum statements are critical resources for this module as well.

It is of the utmost importance that you use the study guide as well as the following study material and resources in concert when you study this module:

- all tutorial letters published in support of and relevant to this module
- the prescribed text, *The educator as assessor* (Dreyer 2013)
- the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for the subject/subjects you intend to teach – <http://www.education.gov.za>
- The National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 – <http://www.education.gov.za>
- Open Education Resources you are referred to in this study guide
- any other relevant resources sourced by you as an independent scholar and student of assessment

All these resources are available online. The tutorial letters and this study guide are available on myUnisa at no extra cost. All OER we refer you to are also available on the internet at no cost. Only the prescribed textbook, *The educator as assessor* (second edition), is available as a book and an e-book at additional cost.

You have to have all these resources at hand when you study any part of the module, obviously using this study guide at all times to guide your efforts. Again, the need for you to be computer literate and have direct and immediate access to the internet is obvious!

Always bear in mind that this study guide actually operates much as a teacher does. It will structure your learning, explain concepts and direct you to other parts of the module or OER at appropriate junctures. It will facilitate your learning.

We suggest you open a file on your PC, laptop or tablet and name it “EDAHOD 5 – WORKBOOK” in which to do all the activities contained in the study guide, write additional notes and generally record your ideas and concerns as you work through the module. Any activity in this guide can then be copied from this study guide into your workbook, done, revised and amended as you progress through the module. You may even want to include aspects from other sources you have accessed in your studies.

Your workbook file should contain a record of your learning about and understanding of the work of an educator and assessor, and will most certainly stand you in good stead when you have to give an account of your learning in doing assignments during the semester and in writing the examination at the end of the semester. In fact, if used cleverly, most of your responses to the activities can be used or copied directly into your assignments!

Learning aims and outcomes for this module

The essence of the work of an educator as assessor is clearly summarised in the definition of assessment given in CAPS:

“Assessment is a continuous, planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners, and may take various forms. It involves four steps: generating and collecting evidence of achievement; evaluating this evidence; recording the findings, and using this information. The information is particularly used to understand and thereby assist the learner’s development in order to improve the process of learning and teaching” (CAPS 2011:49).

In this understanding of assessment, it is **a planned process** first and foremost. This means that, as an educator and assessor, you have to **plan** to:

1. *generate and collect evidence of the achievements of your learners*
2. *evaluate or judge such evidence produced by your learners*
3. *record the findings of your assessments*
4. *use the information accrued from doing the assessment*

This also clearly explains why this module is focused on **one aim or outcome** only, namely:

Students will demonstrate the ability to plan and prepare assessments for learners.

This means that you will be assessed during the semester and at the end of the semester for your ability to plan (write up) assessments for the learners you teach and assess in your subject, as well as your ability to prepare all resources (human and physical) for such assessments.

Obviously, we would have preferred to also include your ability to conduct assessments of learners, for example how you would have a test written by your learners and how you would mark their scripts or answers using a memorandum and/or assessment tools. From an assessment perspective, however, it would be impossible for us to assess your ability to do actual assessments

at school as it would be logistically unmanageable for us, your lecturers and tutors, to visit every one of you in a school to see how you assess your learners in reality. In any event, most of you are not currently teaching at a school, making it altogether impossible for us to assess this ability.

It is manageable, however, to assess your ability to plan and prepare for assessments, as your ability to plan and prepare for assessing learners can be assessed by means of evaluating your thinking about assessment, as well as assessing actual assessment plans and assessment instruments you plan to use in assessing your learners, even if you are not currently teaching and assessing learners.

Your ability to actually conduct assessments is assessed in the practice teaching module of the course you are enrolled for.

Apart from this general aim or outcome for this module, every learning unit in this study guide will have more specific study unit aims, objectives and outcomes focusing on particular aspects related to the planning of, and preparing for assessments.

You may review the table of contents of this study guide to get an idea of the more specific aims, objectives, and outcomes of this module.

A two-way conversation

As alluded to you earlier, the study guide is not like an old-fashioned textbook, to be read and learned by heart. We have written it in the form of a conversation on assessment as one of your core tasks as an educator.

Like all good conversations, the study guide works best if you participate, thus making it a two-way conversation. To encourage your participation, we have included many activities, all of which will require of you to think hard and deeply on relevant aspects of assessment. In fact, it is probably true to say that your work in response to these activities is the most important part of the guide. If you do not do the activities, you will be ignoring the major part of the learning experience, which is your own thinking and which reflects your understanding of particular concepts.

Another very important aspect of this two-way engagement with us and other students and experienced teachers on the content of this study guide is to rethink and reflect on what you have read and learned along the way so as to gain an ever-deeper understanding of the issues at hand. This will result in your becoming more and more confident in applying assessment theory to practice in your personal context. It is important to know that understanding (as opposed to rote learning) develops in layers. Think about how we get to know things in the world. When we are first introduced to an idea, it seems strange and confusing. Only when we engage with and think, talk, read and write about things on a regular basis do their full importance and relevance become clear to us.

Application of theory to practice

The ultimate test for success in this module lies in your ability to apply what you learn during the course of your studies to assessing learners in your subject. You will note that many of the activities will require of you to do exactly that – apply a construct, theory, concept or similar to assessing learners in your subject and context.

Although the study guide already constitutes a conversation between us, the lecturers and tutors at the university and you the student/teacher, we believe that you should also set aside time to talk with other students and more experienced teachers. Talking about assessment issues, especially if you have debates and arguments, is an effective way of studying anything, including this module. It will allow you to ground many of the theoretical ideas that are presented in your own context. It may also be a good idea to establish contact with fellow students and experienced teachers teaching the same subject or subjects as you do.

The study guide makes use of a variety of techniques in the activities designed for learning. These include dialogues, scenarios, case studies, debates, mind maps and the like to structure your learning and our teaching. Mostly, these activities are used inductively, which means you will be arriving at the principles or deeper insights by yourself. The comments and explanations by us, the lecturers, throughout will highlight such important principles and insights.

A vital learning skill is the ability to plot your own progress. This is only possible, however, if you keep a record of your understanding throughout the course. You can then return to the earlier work and see how your understanding has changed, grown and developed. This makes your workbook a very important part of your learning strategy. It will become the record of your thinking – and of the changes in your thinking – about your work as an educator and assessor.

Note the meanings of the following icons

You will notice that we use some icons in the study guide to assist you in the use of the guide itself. Make sure that you do exactly what is required by every icon.



This icon indicates a formal activity which you should do in your workbook. It is important to bear in mind that questions and tasks contained in the assignments and examination will come from these activities, thus giving you the best opportunities to learn and give an account of what you learn in this module.



Pay special attention to this icon: it points to important information about the particular topic under discussion. Comments and guidelines will accompany this icon. It may also refer you to OER relevant to the issue at hand.



We all learn in our own particular ways using our own preferred styles of learning. This icon prompts you to reflect and think about work you have done in the course of your studies, especially

aspects you find useful and enjoyable in terms of your own preferred learning style. Reflect on the previous discussions and arguments to find and verbalise or describe your own meaning and understanding. This may also require you to access OER. Always capture the result of such reflection in your workbook. These records may include a comment of your own, an illustration, a summary, a definition in your own words, a mind map, and so on. Be sure to record these in a way that you can understand.

Learn more using e-learning

Access the web and learn more. This icon wants you to go beyond what is available in the prescribed text and OER referred to. It requires that you access the web to find resources relevant to assessment in your specific subject or subjects.

Planning your studies

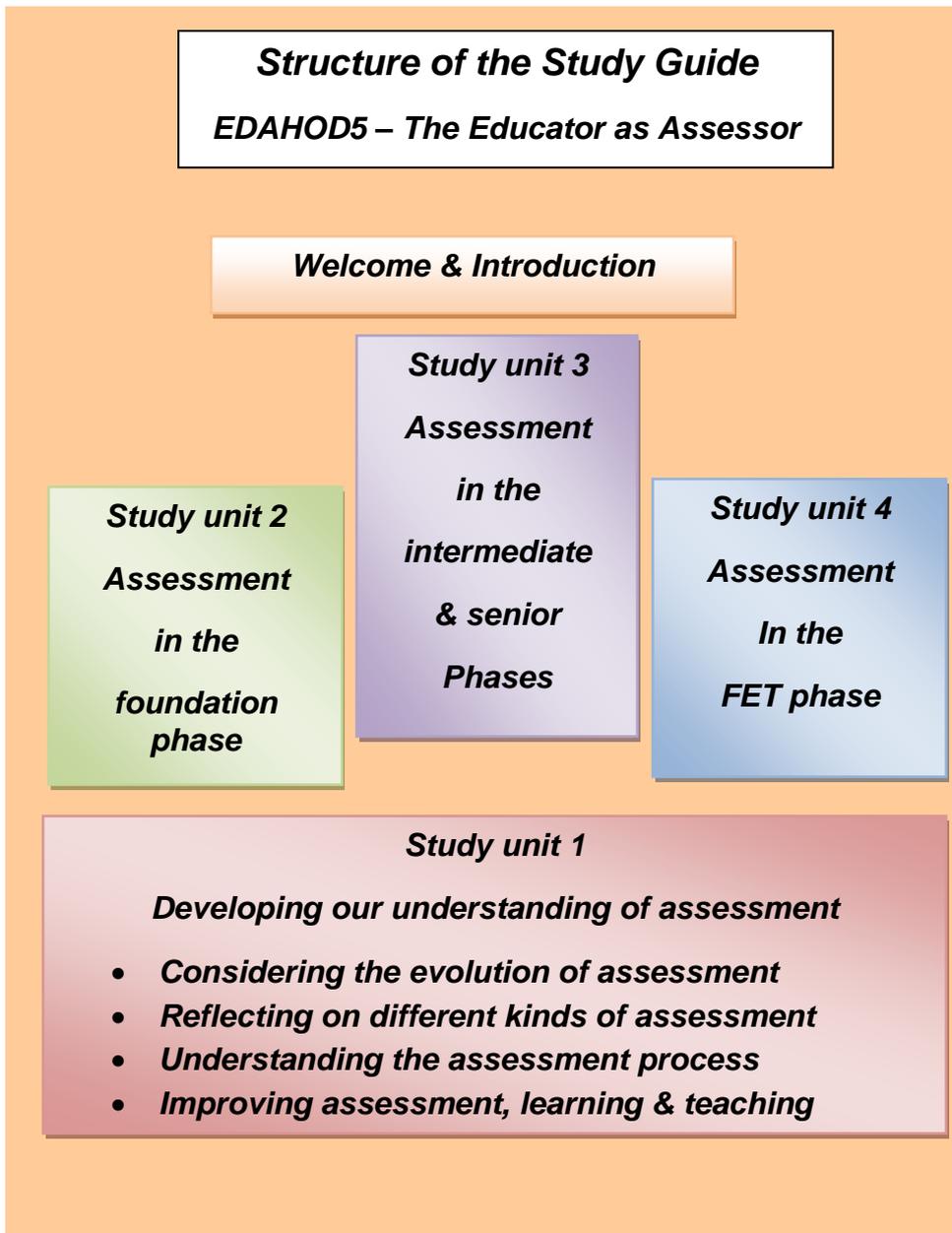
We believe this module requires about six hours of work a week for a period of about 20 weeks. In other words, you should set aside about 120 hours of study time. But, of course, not all students work at the same pace, so you may well find you need more (or slightly less) time.

Generally speaking, we would expect you to spend the 120 hours as follows:

- **Reading time:** 60 hours (this includes reading the study guide, the prescribed text as well as other learning material such as OER)
- **Activity time:** 40 hours (this includes the time it takes you to think about your readings, do activities and capture these in your workbook)
- **Time spent in writing assignments:** 20 hours (the time it should take to write the assignments you will submit to your tutors for assessment)

The structure of the study guide

The structure of the study guide is illustrated in the diagram below.



NB: You are now going to do the first learning activity!

Bear in mind that this first activity also serves as an ice-breaker, it is designed to give you the first experience of interactive learning in this module. It also serves to consolidate and encapsulate your understanding of assessment in broad terms as a starting point from which to think about your work as an assessor.

Copy the activity below into your *WORKBOOK* file and then respond!



Activity 1 **Understanding and describing the structure of the module**

Study the diagram illustrating the structure of this study guide above and read the table of contents of the prescribed text carefully. Respond to the following questions in your workbook:

- a. Why do you think study unit 1 is depicted as being so much larger than the other study units?
- b. Why is study unit 1 positioned at the bottom of the illustration and the other study units above it?
- c. In which study units do you think would we find the most information regarding assessment in CAPS context? Why do you think so?
- d. Why do you have to study assessment in all phases of schooling, even when you are probably going to teach learners in only one of these phases?
- e. Imagine that your friend Siphwe is a fellow student enrolled for this module. She is blind and asks you to describe the structure of the module to her as she cannot see the illustration. Describe the structure of the module to her verbally and then write down your description in your workbook.

Do not continue until you have completed this activity!



Comment

I think that a picture paints more than a thousand words ...

I also think that study unit 1 deals with the general, fundamental and more theoretical issues and is therefore depicted as larger, because it contains a lot of information. I think that it is positioned at the bottom to symbolise the foundational nature of the study unit – assessment in all phases of schooling rests upon sound assessment theory!

I think that study units 2 – 4 will provide the most information regarding assessment in the CAPS context - maybe because these study units indicate how assessment is done in reality.

I also think that you are not only a teacher, you are a scholar studying assessment – and this means that you should consider almost everything about assessment in the South African context. An educator and assessor need to be well informed about the way learners are assessed in the preceding phase and how they are assessed in the next phase in order to assess them appropriately in the phase they are in currently.

Besides, you may be promoted at some time in your future and, as an education manager, you should have a keen understanding of assessment in all phases and even in higher education.

As far as explaining the diagram to Sipiwe, I think you would have done better than me!

Finally, I also think that now that the ice has been broken, we can really start our work by engaging with study unit 1!

Study Unit 1 Assessment Theory

In their introduction, the authors of the prescribed text, *The educator as assessor*, make use of two very powerful techniques to teach us about assessment.

The first is to simply display a quote relevant to the issue at hand. No explanation is given. Only the quote and author are given.

The second technique is to make use of an analogy. The analogy is explained in considerable detail.

Activity 1.1 wants to focus your attention on these two techniques as they are crucial in working through the prescribed text.

Activity 1.1



Read the quote on page v of the prescribed text again and answer the following questions:

1. *What do you think is the reason for starting the introduction to the text with this particular quote?*
2. *What do the words "ardour" and "diligence" mean with regards to your studies of this module?*
3. *Does the fact that the position taken in the quote was the position taken by Abigail Adams carry any weight or significance for you? Why or why not?*

Read the rest of the introduction and answer the following questions regarding the analogy of assessment being the vehicle that makes the learning journey possible:

4. *Does the basic similarity between assessment in school contexts and a journey taken by a driver and passengers make logical sense to you? Why or why not?*
5. *Do you agree with the analogy regarding learners being passengers? What is the danger of this part of the analogy?*

Study the table of contents for chapter 1. Note that the chapter heading and the 17 sub-headings follow the logic of the analogy and the contents of the sub-sections follow the logic of assessment-related issues, topics, theories and so on.

6. *Copy the chapter heading into your workbook file and list the 17 sub-headings under the chapter heading. List the 17 sub-headings only! Now read every sub-heading and ask yourself: "What does it mean in the context of assessment?"*

(Find the answers to each of these questions by reading what is listed in the table of contents under the specific sub-heading.)



Comment

I think that quotes make us think. Some quotes are so powerful and true, it does not even matter who the author is!

The use of analogies is based on one of the most basic principles of learning and teaching – i.e. to start with the known and use it to unfold and understand the unknown.

It uses something that we already know very well, usually something concrete and relatively easy to understand, and compares the new, unknown, more complex, theoretical and relatively more difficult concept, issue or theory to it. The key is that the unknown is similar to the known.

Regarding the analogy used in the prescribed text to help you understand assessment better, I think that there are several very useful and accurate similarities between taking a journey in a vehicle and coming to understand assessment as an integral part of learning and teaching.

There is one major concern in my mind, however, and that is the analogy that learners are like passengers. We must be very clear on the fundamental truth, namely that learners are the constructors of their own understanding – they are active participants in their own learning, and not passengers, who will reach the destination, simply by being in the vehicle, be it as inexperienced young ones, more experienced youths or very experienced adults.

Analogies can help us, but they do not explain everything! They also do not always illustrate exactly what it is that we want to understand. This means that we must go beyond the analogy and grapple with the real issue head on as well – otherwise, our understanding will remain limited.

This also means that you have to understand the content under every sub-heading in the text better than the analogy!



Learn more using e-learning

You may want to see more quotes on teaching, learning, and assessment. Simply go onto any search engine and search "Quotes on assessment"...

Beware! Reading these quotes online can be very interesting indeed and may consume a lot of your time!

Download the ones that “do it” for you! You may want to use these in your teaching by displaying them on your classroom walls or by using the multimedia projector.



Rethink and reflect

You will notice that we will refer to the analogy time and again during the rest of this study unit. Refer back to this activity often to make sure you apply the analogy correctly in activities where the analogy may be applicable. In the assignments and examination, you will be required to demonstrate both your understanding of and your ability to apply the assessment theory – not the analogy per se!

Activity 1.1 served to give you an overview of the theoretical aspects you have to understand and apply as an educator and assessor. The activities that follow tackle every aspect reflected in the table of contents of the prescribed text and follow the journey in the analogy step by step.



Activity 1.2.1

Starting the assessment journey

From analogy to paradox or anomaly

Is it possible to start a journey both at the beginning and at the end? Refer to the assessment journey in your response.

Answer this question by studying sections 1.2.1 and 1.3 in the prescribed book very carefully.



Comment

When we think about the history of assessment as an educational practice, we realise that it started very long ago. Maybe we should also consider where assessment as we know it today in the South African educational context, originated.

*If we want to **study** it, we must start at the beginning ...*

However, when we want to do an assessment, we have to start at the end, i.e. we must ask: "What is expected of learners after this year or phase of learning?" Our assessment of their learning must start with what the curriculum demands, prescribes or dictates.

*If we want to **do** it, we start at the end ...*

Very few journeys in life are started without having a destination in mind!



Activity 1.2.2

Assessment versus evaluation

Study section 1.2.2 in the prescribed book carefully and answer the following questions:

1. Are the experts in agreement on the meaning of the two terms, evaluation and assessment? Why do you say so?
2. Is it important to be clear on the difference between the two concepts? Why?
3. How would you record your judgment if you evaluated the work of one of your learners? Will you use a percentage or a statement of competence?
4. How would you record your judgment if you assessed the work of one of your learners? Would you use a percentage or a statement of competence?
5. Summarise your own understanding of the two terms in two short definitions. Give an example of each.
6. How does CAPS view assessment and evaluation?
7. Apply the CAPS understanding of assessment by doing the following:
 - 7.1 Give an example of any assessment activity you might want your learners to do, for example, write a test, or do a role-play, compile a research report and so on.
 - 7.2 What would be the evidence of the learners' performance? How would this evidence be gathered? Who would provide the evidence?
 - 7.3 How would the evidence be evaluated? Who would evaluate the evidence? How would the result of the evaluation be recorded?



Comment

*I think that the important thing to remember is that the practice of doing assessment or evaluation is a **dual practice**. We **gather evidence**, then we **assess or evaluate the evidence**.*

My learners write the test (I gather evidence) and then I mark the scripts (I assess or evaluate the evidence).

Sometimes we do the gathering and evaluating at the same time. (Learners do a role-play – i.e. they provide the evidence in the performance, and I assess or evaluate the evidence while the performance is being done or immediately afterward.)

When evaluation is done, the judgements are usually recorded as percentages because this provides an idea of how much has been done, or how well the task has been done. Learners' performances can easily be compared to one another and to the average performance of the group or class – or even to a "pass mark" after everyone has been evaluated.

When assessment is done, the judgements are usually recorded as statements of competence because this answers the question of whether the task has been achieved or not. Learners' performances are compared to the pre-determined standard or requirement. It is not easy to compare learners' performances to one another as there are only two groups identified in the assessment – those who can perform to the desired standard and those who cannot yet perform to the required standard.

I also agree with the notion that an education system should do both assessment and evaluation. In the end, we want to answer both questions – whether every individual learner has achieved what was required, and how well individual learners and groups of learners have learned what was required.



Activity 1.2.3

What is an assessment?

Study section 1.2.3 in the prescribed text carefully and then do the following in your workbook file:

Create a mind map to illustrate your understanding of assessment in a wider context reflecting the answers to the four questions:

- *What is an assessment? (Definition)*
- *Why do we assess? (Purposes)*
- *Who assesses? (Assessors)*
- *What is assessed? (Learner achievements)*

You are encouraged to be very critical of what is presented in the prescribed text. Consult other resources as well.



Activity 1.3

Copy the following heading into your workbook file:

OUR DESTINATION

Access the CAPS for any one of the grades and subjects you teach or intend to teach. What are the aims of the subject? Copy the aim, or aims, as stated in the CAPS, under the heading.

The answer to this question describes the destination towards which you and your learners are traveling or would be traveling. You would have to assess your learners during the journey to determine how they are progressing, and at the end to see whether they have reached the destination. To do both, assessment during the learning process as well as after the learning process will obviously require careful planning. The next two activities focus on the importance of planning and on the use of assessment criteria.



Activity 1.4 Planning Assessment

Study section 1.4.1 of the prescribed text very carefully and apply the planning steps suggested in Table 1.1 by doing the following:

- Go back to activity 1.3 and consult the CAPS for your subject again. Select any theme, topic or sub-topic from the CAPS. In addition, identify the assessment tasks prescribed in CAPS.
- Identify the relevant knowledge, skills, and values prescribed in CAPS for the particular theme or topic.
- Develop a very elementary lesson plan for teaching any aspect identified above. Simultaneously develop a very elementary assessment plan for assessing learners during and after the lesson.
- Briefly, describe the major learning activity in the lesson and also describe the major assessment activity for assessing the learners during or after the lesson.

Copy the table below into your workbook file and use the prompts on the table to respond to this activity.

Planning for teaching & learning	Planning for assessment
Aims	Assessment strategy
What knowledge, skills and values are to be learnt: Knowledge Skills Values	What knowledge, skills and values are to be learnt: Knowledge Skills Values
<u>Lesson plan</u> How will I teach? How will they learn? How will I conclude the lesson?	<u>Assessment plan integrated into learning</u> How will I evaluate my teaching? How will they show that they have learnt? How will they consolidate what they have learnt?
List of teaching and learning activities in sequence:	List of assessment activities relative to teaching or learning activities

The idea here is that you will select only one aspect, sub-topic or skill from the CAPS to do this activity. Keep it really simple and straight-forward. Obviously, the major learning activity and the major assessment activity have to be the same or similar.

Your responses to Activities 1.3 and 1.4 should clearly indicate that teaching, learning and assessment are integrated into reality. The three integrated activities are similar to the strands in a rope or a "koeksister". In fact, the koeksister analogy illustrates the intrinsically intertwined nature of the three components better than the analogy of a rope does. In reality, the three components are inextricably intertwined.

Understanding assessment criteria

In essence, assessment criteria are very clear statements that describe a performance in terms of observable and measurable qualities to indicate the standard required in that performance. (A performance refers to an attempt by a learner to demonstrate that he or she has achieved the learning intention or subject aim.)

More than one criterion is usually applied to any performance because most performances are made up of various aspects or components. It would thus be exceptional for a performance to have only one assessment criterion!

Assessment criteria should be both observable and measurable in order to describe a performance in such a way that it can be assessed. Performances by learners are usually described by means of several related criteria, rather than just one criterion. Collectively all the assessment criteria related to a specific performance indicate the standard of the performance required.

Let us consider a concrete and practical example.

When a learner carpenter has to hang a door in a door frame, the performance to be assessed is:

Hang a door in a door frame to specifications

Several assessment criteria will apply:

- In the closed position, the gap between the bottom of the door and the floor has to be no more than 4 mm.
- In the closed position, the gap between the door frame and the sides and top of the door should not be more than 3 mm.
- The hinges should be sunk into the door frame and the door in order to be flush with the surface of the frame and of the door.
- The door should be able to swing open and close through 180 degrees.
- A door stop should be fitted to the floor to prevent the door handle from touching the wall when the door is open.
- The door handle and lock mechanism must be flush with the surface of the door.
- The door handle should return to the original position when used to open or close the door.
- The lock should be fitted in such a way that it should be able to lock and unlock using two fingers only.
- The door should be treated with the required paint or varnish as per specifications.

You will agree that every one of these criteria is observable and measurable by measuring the gaps, observing the fittings and by opening and closing the door as well as by locking and unlocking the door AFTER the learner Carpenter has hung a door in a door frame.

Also, note that all 10 of these criteria have to be met in order for the learner carpenter to be declared competent.

Also, note that none of these criteria can be partially met. The standard of performance expressed in every criterion is either met or not met.

Assessment criteria bring absolute clarity to what we teach as educators, what learners learn and what we assess as assessors. Any learning intention stipulated in a curriculum can be described in terms of something that learners should do (a verb), and an object (a noun), as well as a standard or context. Consider the following example:

In Tourism for Grade 10, one of the specific aims mentioned in the CAPS curriculum is: ***In the subject Tourism, learners will study different types of tourists and the purpose of their traveling.*** This means that Grade 10 learners must know and understand different types of tourists.

The **verb** is *studied (learn) about*.

The **objects** to be studied are *different types of tourists*.

The **context** is that *every type of tourist has a particular purpose for traveling*.

The following questions, among many others, may arise:

- What are the types of tourists that can be identified?
- Why should we know about and understand types of tourists?
- What are the purposes of traveling for every type of tourist?
- How are tourist interests and tourist experiences matched with one another?
- How do we draw up a tourist profile?

The questions above are some of the **assessment criteria** relevant to the learning intention or subject aim. Someone who knows and understands tourism at grade 10 level should be able to answer all these questions.

The learners have to learn about types of tourists to be able to answer the questions (assessment criteria).

The teacher has to help the learners to achieve the intended learning by finding the answers to the questions (assessment criteria).

The assessor has to assess the learners against the questions (assessment criteria) to determine whether – and how well – learners have learnt about the learning intention.



Activity 1.4.2

Assessment criteria

Consider the argument made above, study section 1.4.2 on assessment criteria and complete the following task in your workbook file:

1. Copy the diagram below into your workbook file.
2. Identify a learning intention or subject aim from the CAPS for your subject.
3. Consult a reputable textbook for your subject and list the assessment criteria that you regard to be relevant to achieving the subject aim you have identified.

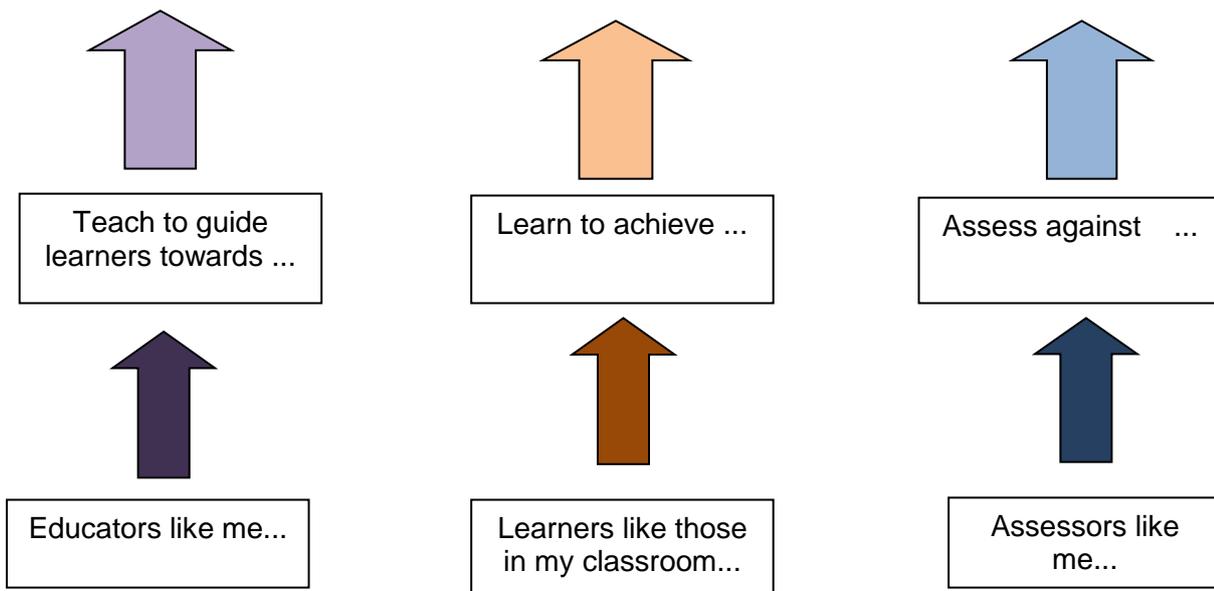
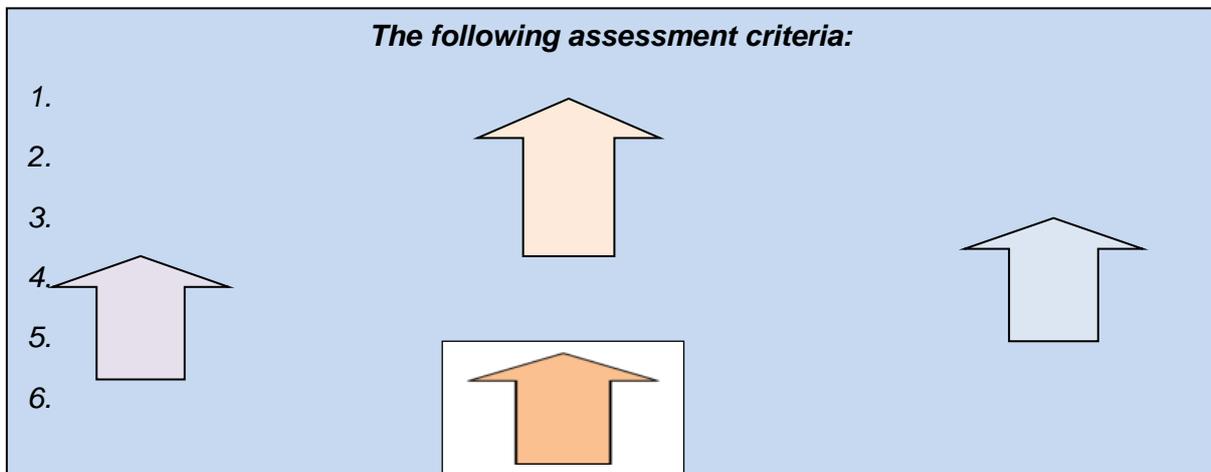
Remember that the diagram has to be read from the bottom of the page (which refers to educators, learners, and assessors) upwards to the top (which refers to learning intentions for the subject).

The following learning intention or subject aim:

Subject:

Aim:

The function of assessment criteria



(Adapted from Dreyer 2014:10)

Remember to read this diagram from the bottom upwards!

E.g. Learners like those in my classroom learn to achieve the following assessment criteria in order to achieve the following learning intention....

In activity 1.2.4 you clearly indicated that assessment criteria are relevant to educators, assessors and learners alike. The question may be asked: Who else is involved in or have a stake in assessment in an educational context? The following activity will help you in answering this question.



Activity 1.5 Stakeholders in assessment

Study section 1.5 of the prescribed text with care and complete the following task:

Create a mind map reflecting all stakeholders in assessment. Your mind map must have three levels or layers:

- The central concept is **STAKEHOLDERS IN ASSESSMENT**.
- The first level should indicate the stakeholders by name.
- The second level should indicate the function in relation with or stake that every stakeholder has with regards to assessment in an educational context.



Comment

I believe that understanding the stakes that various stakeholders have in education (and in assessment in particular) will result in educators being more professional and careful in their conduct as assessors. So often in life, we lose sight of the bigger picture. Bearing all the stakeholders and their interests in mind helps us to plan and conduct an assessment in a responsible way.



Rethink and reflect

You will have learnt from what we have done thus far that assessment, teaching, and learning are integrated into educational practice.

You will also have learnt that we start our work as assessors by considering the learning intentions or subject aims first and by relating these to the relevant assessment criteria. We do this not only when we want to assess, but indeed already when we plan our teaching of the curriculum. Further, you will have learnt that understanding assessment criteria are fundamental to effective teaching, learning, and assessment.

The role played by assessment in educational practice needs some deeper investigation. The activities that follow will require you to engage at a much deeper and more academic level with the issues at hand.

Let us return to the analogy of assessment being the vehicle that drives the teaching and learning process forward towards the learning intentions or subject aims.

You will all agree that starting a journey requires some planning. You don't just get into a car and drive around without having a purpose to the journey, not so? You do not depart without ensuring that everyone is on board.

In this assessment context, the previous activities have focused on the need to plan teaching, learning, and assessment carefully as an integrated endeavour, to make sure we take into account the interests of all the relevant stakeholders, and to consider the assessment criteria very carefully.

The critical question we now have to answer is:

How do we ensure that teaching, learning and assessment progress in the most effective manner?

In terms of the analogy used in the prescribed text, we are now moving along on our journey. How do we ensure that the journey will be completed without any major incident? In the analogy the answer is relatively simple – stick to the rules of the road, not so?

On the teaching, learning and assessment journey, however, "sticking to the rules" is a bit more complicated than driving a car!

The prescribed text focuses on three important concepts, namely:

- assessment in teaching and learning
- assessment for learning
- authentic assessment

The activities that follow will assist you in mastering these three constructs.

When you are busy teaching and your learners are busy learning, you and your learners will know that the teaching and learning going on are successful only if you also assess while you teach and while they learn.

Assessment in teaching and learning highlights the point that not all learning is assessed in a formal way, but that teaching and learning in school contexts always include some formal assessments that are deliberately planned for the purpose of confirming teaching effectiveness and learning success.



Activity 1.6.1

Assessment in teaching and learning

Study section 1.6.2 and give an example of how you might assess learning success without having to use a formal assessment task when teaching your subject to learners in an ordinary classroom situation.

Also, give an example of a formally set assessment task in your teaching and learning context.

The construct or concept "assessment for learning" means that we assess during teaching and learning with a specific purpose in mind, namely that learning will occur successfully.

Assessment for learning can be done in a wide variety of ways:

- As teachers we ask questions and learners respond to lessons – cleverly designed questions (and the responses to them) will form a logical chain of reasoning that will lead learners from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex, from the theory to the practice or from the practice to the theory.
- We respond to questions asked by learners, and every question asked becomes an opportunity for learning, not only for the one who asked, but also to those who may not have asked, but who had the same question in their minds.
- We use peer assessments so that learners may learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses.
- We ask learners to do self-assessment so that they can reflect on their own performances and realise where they have done well, and where they still have room to improve.
- We often do group activities where learners share ideas, tackle challenges collectively and propose solutions which are assessed by the teacher, or peers, or other groups, or where a whole group discussion consolidates what has been learnt.
- We do self, peer and group assessments, also with the purpose of giving learners the opportunity to make sense of the learning content and assessment criteria, usually on their own first, and later with assistance from the teacher as needed.
- We give learners class work and homework so that they can apply what has been learnt. The assessment of this work results in our identifying areas of concern, and in consequent revision or even re-teaching.

In all these examples, the focus is not on assessing learners with the purpose of awarding marks that may count toward the term mark, but on *assessment for learning!* The planning is done in order to provide opportunities for learning when the learners complete the actual assessment task.

In the prescribed text, another view on assessment for learning is explained, namely that it is used by teachers to adapt their teaching or instruction in order to be more effective. Surely, you would not have any reason to change your planned method of teaching and learning if your assessment of the learning going on shows that learning is progressing well. However, assessment for learning, during the teaching/learning process may identify an urgent need to adjust the teaching method should it indicate that learners are not following the original (planned) method of teaching envisaged by you, the teacher.

Activity 1.6.2 serves to help you apply the theory behind assessment for learning to the context of your subject and learners.

Activity 1.6.2



Assessment for Learning

“Teachers assess to test; educators assess to assist learning.” Dave Carter

1. *In section 1.6.2, five broad strategies for achieving assessment for learning are described. Use every strategy mentioned as a sub-heading and give an example of how you would apply the strategy in your context.*

2. *In the same section, eight ways of expanding classroom assessment beyond mere checking of progress are suggested. Study these, then using the phrase in each which is printed in **italics**, give an example of how you would apply each of these ways of achieving assessment for learning in your context.*
3. *Explain the diagram illustrating assessment for learning in your own words. Include the views expressed by Stiggins (2002) in your response. Refer to any of the examples of assessment for learning in your subject that you have used in your responses to question 1 or 2 above.*
4. *Give an example from your own context to illustrate how you may use assessment for learning to adjust your teaching method to make learning more effective.*

The prescribed text argues that the best way to achieve an authentic, balanced and fair assessment of the progress of a learner is to provide each learner with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate his or her competence in different ways and in different contexts.

Activity 1.6.3 is designed to assist you in making sense of what is meant by *authentic assessment*.



Activity 1.6.3 *Authentic assessment*

1. *Read section 1.6.3 in the prescribed text to get a general sense of what authentic assessment is.*
2. *Read the section for a second time, this time underlining in pencil all the keywords or key phrases that describe authentic assessment. If you do this very carefully and thoroughly you will be able to identify at least 20 such keywords or phrases.*
3. *Using the keywords and phrases you have identified, create a mind map to illustrate the concept of authentic assessment and include it in your workbook file.*
4. *Answer the following questions regarding authentic assessment, in writing, in your file:*
 - 4.1 *Does authentic assessment refer to the general practice of conducting assessments, or does it refer to every assessment task you plan to do with your learners?*
 - 4.2 *Do you think that it is possible to plan every assessment task to reflect all the characteristics of authentic assessment? Motivate your response.*
 - 4.3 *Explain what you would have to do if your response to the previous question is "no".*
 - 4.4 *Give an example of an "ill-structured" challenge and role from your context that would prepare your learners for the real world.*
 - 4.5 *CAPS guidelines for assessments have done away with the practice of learners having to complete portfolios of evidence. How does this impact on authentic assessment in your context?*
 - 4.6 *Describe an example of an assessment task in your context that would meet the requirements of authentic assessment reflected in the last paragraph of section 1.6.3 in the prescribed text. Use the following prompts:*

- *Subject, Grade, CAPS theme, topic(s), or sub-topic(s)*
- *Purpose of the assessment activity*
- *Assessment task title or name*
- *Instructions to learners*
- *List of assessment criteria*

Maybe you would like to share this example with one of your fellow students or an experienced teacher. Ask him or her to comment on your responses to the questions also!

Maybe you would be brave enough to post your responses to this activity on the myUnisa forum!



Comment

Comment on your responses to activities 1.6.1–1.6.3

I think that we should think of the three aspects, assessment in teaching and learning, assessment for learning and authentic assessment in an integrated way. Textbooks are often structured in terms of identifiable concepts which are then listed as if these are separate ideas. This may create the impression that assessment in teaching and learning, assessment for learning and authentic assessment are three unrelated or loosely related aspects. This not the case at all!

In fact, for assessment to be effectively integrated into teaching and learning it has to be authentic and, at the same time, it has to be used for the specific purpose of providing opportunities for learning. Obviously, authentic assessment used in teaching and learning with the purpose of being an assessment for learning has to be complimented by summative assessment after the learning process has been completed. Such summative assessments should, of course, also be authentic!

I don't think that every single assessment task we want our learners to do can always meet all the requirements of being authentic as listed in the activities you have completed. At the same time, I think that there is no place for assessment tasks that are not authentic – in principle, at least. Assessment tasks must make sense! Learners are entitled to know why they need to do a particular task. If the relevance and applicability cannot be indicated, the task is not authentic at all and is a waste of time!

Comment on understanding assessment

Please bear in mind that several assessment-related concepts, ideas, aspects, theories, principles and the like have been discussed and will still be discussed and presented throughout this module and that the same argument will hold true, namely that we should think about assessment in an integrated way. Always try to think of assessment in a holistic way, rather than focusing on separate aspects that may seem unrelated. When aspects or views presented seem unrelated, think harder! Ask! Reflect! Seek relevance!

Also be very careful every time you come across the word "assessment".

Read and listen for the contexts in which it is used. Each use may refer to slightly different ideas about assessment:

- *Assessment is understood as a broad concept covering the general practice in an education system.*
- *Assessment is also understood as something a teacher does – e.g. marking test papers.*
- *Assessment is also understood as something learners do – e.g. writing an essay, or making a poster.*
- *Assessment is an integrated part of teaching and learning.*
- *Assessment is understood as having various forms, types, purposes – formative assessment, summative assessment, peer-assessment, self-assessment, group-assessment, diagnostic assessment, baseline assessment.*
- *Assessment is a cyclical process – plan and prepare, then gather evidence, then assess the evidence, then record the results, then provide feedback, then review the assessment, then start again ... only this time around, do better at planning, preparing, gathering and assessing.*
- *An assessment is understood as an event – one teacher has to assess the responses to an assessment task or activity done by a specific number of learners in a particular grade at a particular time during the academic year.*
- *Assessment is a dual process – evidence is collected and the same evidence is evaluated or judged.*
- *The assessment uses different methods and instruments, and sometimes no clear distinction is made between assessment process, method and instrument, evidence, and so on.*

A final hint: Every time you come across the word, try to identify which of the meanings listed above is being used by the author or speaker and ask for clarity if you are not sure!



Rethink and reflect

I am sure the analogy of assessment as the vehicle carrying teaching and learning forward makes even more sense to you now.

The prescribed text refers to a wide variety of assessment-related concepts as road signs on the teaching, learning and assessment journey. Similar to the road signs on the road that we take heed of when driving a car safely and effectively, these concepts are guiding lights when we assess our learners.

The following concepts are listed and described or explained in the text:

- assessment principles
- assessment guidelines
- continuous assessment
- traditional assessment
- baseline assessment
- formative assessment
- summative assessment

- diagnostic assessment
- recognition of prior learning
- internal/classroom assessment (CAPS)
- external Assessment (CAPS)

In the sections that follow after 1.7 “Road signs”, several other concepts are also addressed such as:

- criterion-based assessment
- standardised assessment
- high-stakes assessment
- recognition of excellence
- assessment of learning
- assessing performance
- promotion/certification
- assessing the system
- assessing teaching/delivery

As an educator, you are also an assessor. As already indicated in the introduction to this study guide, as an assessor, you should be very well informed about assessment in general, and you should have a very sound understanding of all the concepts, ideas, theories and views related to assessment in school contexts.

Not only should you have a sound understanding of these assessment-related concepts, you should be able to apply these to your context, i.e. to the assessment you have to do in teaching particular subjects in a particular phase of schooling.

The activities that follow are all designed to assist you in understanding and applying the concepts listed under section 1.7 “Road signs” of the prescribed text.

Activity 1.7.1



Assessment principles

Please, note that this activity is comprised of a series of related activities, designed to focus your attention on particular aspects of understanding assessment principles. Do all these activities in your workbook file.



Activity 1.7.1.1

What are principles?

Study a Thesaurus and then explain in your own words what you understand principles to be. Do not think of assessment principles at this stage – rather focus on the meaning of the word "principles" only.



Rethink and reflect

You will have learnt from this activity that principles indicate what the most basic, foundational values and ethics or set of guidelines are with regard to something under scrutiny or discussion. In our case, we want to understand the principles underpinning assessment better. We can understand the principles of assessment properly only when we understand assessment properly.



Activity 1.7.1.2

Assessment principles: What is an assessment?

Identify the one word in the following definition of assessment that indicates what assessment is in essence or in principle.

“Assessment is a continuous, planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners, and may take various forms. It involves four steps: generating and collecting evidence of achievement; evaluating this evidence; recording the findings, and using this information. The information is particularly used to understand and thereby assist the learner’s development in order to improve the process of learning and teaching” (CAPS 2011:49).



Rethink and reflect

*You will have learnt from this activity that assessment is in essence, or in principle, a **process**. The steps in the process are also indicated in the definition – these are:*

- *planning for assessment (suggested in the definition)*
- *generating and collecting the evidence of achievement*
- *evaluating the evidence*
- *recording the findings*
- *using the information*

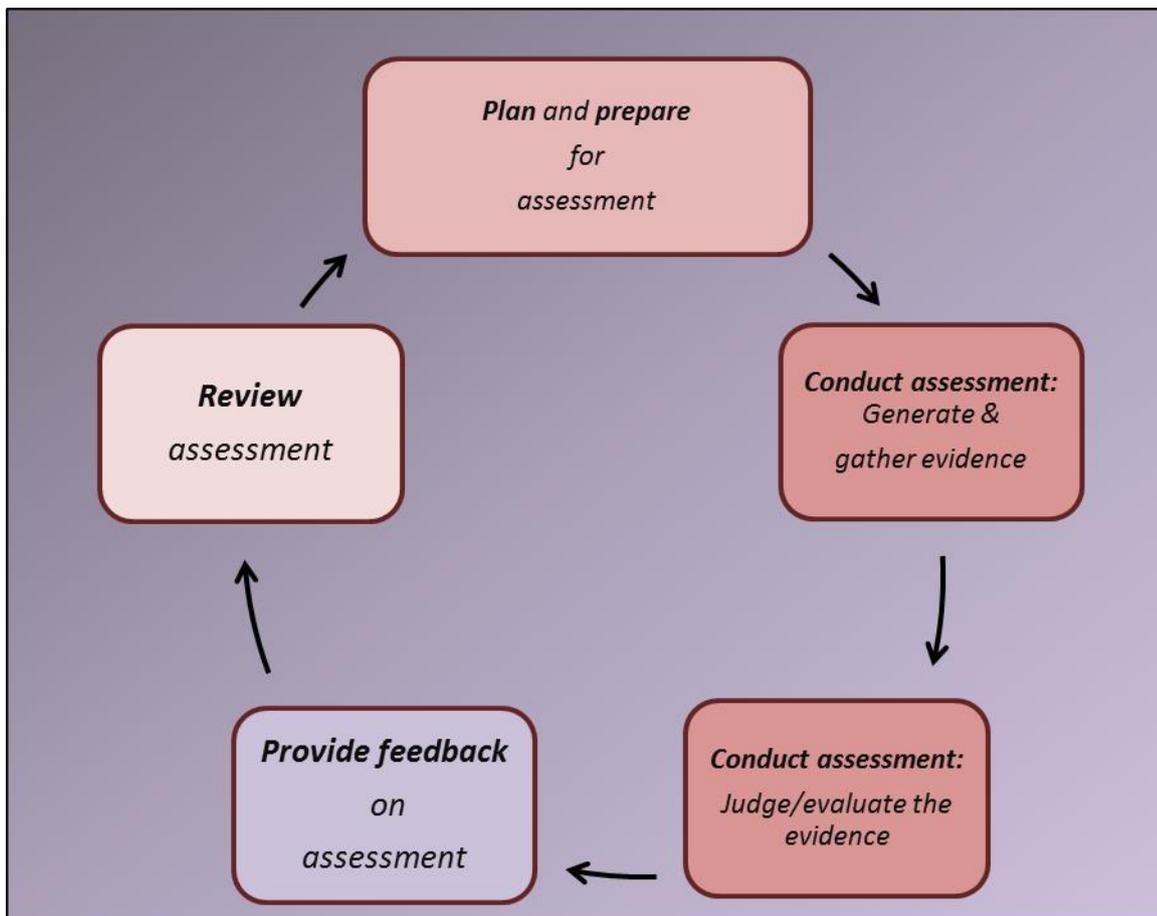
The definition and steps in SAQA's Unit standards correspond with these steps and are reflected in the specific outcomes of the Assessor Unit Standard:

- *Plan and prepare for assessment.*
- *Conduct the assessment.*
- *Provide feedback on assessment.*
- *Review the assessment.*

The diagram below illustrates the cyclical nature of assessment and suggests that we should always take action and then reflect (review) so as to continually improve our assessment practice.

This action-reflection approach suggests that no assessment can ever be perfect and that we should continually seek to improve the quality of our assessments. The principles of assessment play a crucial role here. We will return to this notion later.

Assessment as a cyclical process





Comment

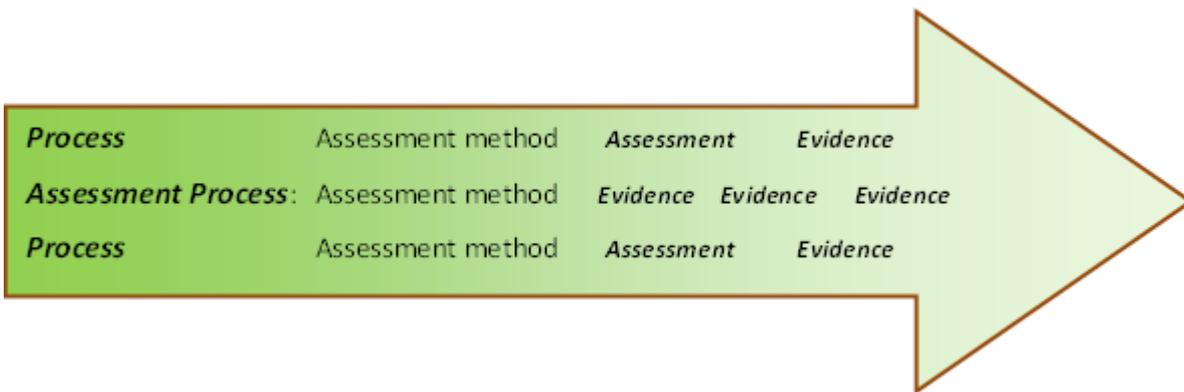
*I think that it is important to bear in mind that **evidence is everything in assessment!***

The evidence in assessment is as important as evidence in a court case – without evidence no judgment can be made! In a court case, the judge may not find someone guilty if there is reasonable doubt.

In education, likewise, you must be convinced of your judgment or evaluation of a learner's achievement – you can be convinced of your judgment or evaluation only when you have based such judgment and evaluation on evidence!

*The assessment **process** is focused on gathering and evaluating **evidence** of learner achievements. When we plan to assess, we decide to use particular assessment **methods** to gather and evaluate the **evidence**.*

Consider the following diagram:



It is critical to bear the following in mind: Assessment is a **process** consisting of and using very specific assessment **methods** as ways of generating, gathering and evaluating assessment **evidence**. When we consider the **principles of assessment** we see that they fall into three categories or groups:

- **principles** relevant to and governing the **overall assessment process**
- **principles** relevant to and governing the **assessment methods** used
- **principles** relevant to and governing the **assessment evidence**

A concluding comment: We as assessors have to apply, uphold, and remain true to the principles of assessment every time we conduct an assessment. To conduct principled assessment requires a focused effort on the part of the educator and assessor – it does not happen automatically, simply because I follow policy or use assessment processes, methods and instruments as instructed. As an assessor, you should wilfully do assessments in line with the principles of assessment.

Assessment principles, as a set of imperative guidelines, are not negotiable – if these fundamental and basic ethics are not adhered to and applied, the work done cannot be considered to be a true and credible assessment.

Please note that the concept "credible assessment" is addressed in more detail later in these activities focused on the principles of assessment.



Activity 1.7.1.3

Understanding the principles of assessment

Study the list of assessment principles as understood by SAQA and referred to in the prescribed text in section 1.7.1 and complete the following three sentences:

1. The overall process of assessment I use as an educator and assessor to assess the achievements of my learners should be ... (Complete the sentence by adding three words only.)
2. At the same time, the assessment methods I use as an educator and assessor to gather and evaluate evidence of learner achievements as part of the assessment process should be... (Complete the sentence by adding four words only.)
3. The evidence that my learners generate, and that I collect and judge as an educator and assessor when I use the assessment methods I have planned to use, should be... (Complete the sentence by adding four words only.)



Activity 1.7.1.4

The principles of assessment continued

Indicate in your own words what it means when the assessment process is **systematic**. Give an example from your context to show how you would ensure this in your everyday assessment practice. Refer to steps in your answer.

Indicate in your own words what it means when the assessment process is **open**. Give an example from your context to show how you would ensure this in your everyday assessment practice. Refer to what is communicated with your learners before the assessment is done.

Indicate in your own words what it means when the assessment process is **reliable**. Give an example from your context to show how you would ensure this in your everyday assessment practice. Refer to the results of your assessments when they are done by another assessor under similar circumstances.



Activity 1.7.1.5

The principles of assessment continued

Indicate in your own words what it means when the assessment method you use is **appropriate**. Give an example from your context to show how you would ensure this in your everyday assessment practice. Refer to the verbs ("doing words") in the questions or tasks that you use.

Indicate in your own words what it means when the assessment method you use is **fair**. Give an example from your context to show how you would ensure this in your everyday assessment

practice. Refer to the way learners are treated before, during and after the method is applied by you, the assessor.

Indicate in your own words what it means when the assessment method you use is **manageable**. Give an example from your context to show how you would ensure this in your everyday assessment practice. Refer to the control you have over resources and procedures during and after the use of a manageable assessment method.

Indicate in your own words what it means when the assessment method we use is **integrated** into work or learning. Give an example from your context to show how you would ensure this in your everyday assessment practice. Refer to the kinds of tasks that learners would be required to do when you use such a method.



Activity 1.7.1.6

The principles of assessment continued

Indicate in your own words what it means when the assessment evidence gathered and judged or evaluated during an assessment is **valid**. Give an example from your context to show how you would ensure this in your everyday assessment practice. Refer to the content prescribed in the curriculum.

Indicate in your own words what it means when the assessment evidence gathered and judged or evaluated during an assessment is **current**. Give an example from your context to show how you would ensure this in your everyday assessment practice. Refer to the time spent between gathering and evaluating the evidence in an assessment.

Indicate in your own words what it means when the assessment evidence gathered and judged or evaluated during an assessment is **authentic**. Give an example from your context to show how you would ensure this in your everyday assessment practice. Refer to who it is that generates the evidence – and to the amount of assistance given to that person – during an assessment.

Indicate in your own words what it means when the assessment evidence gathered and judged or evaluated during an assessment is **sufficient**. Give an example from your context to show how you would ensure this in your everyday assessment practice. Refer to a number of evidence learners have to generate to allow you to be able to make sound judgments and evaluations of learner performances and achievements.



Comment

I think that there are three issues to consider when we contemplate the relevance of assessment principles:

- The first is that we **distinguish** between the three categories of assessment, namely process, method, and evidence when we **think** about assessment in a principled way, but in reality, the assessment **practice is integrated** and the assessment process, methods and evidence are intertwined. The same applies to the principles of assessment.

- The second is that applying and adhering to assessment principles **dictate** that very specific **protocols, policies, and procedures** have to be followed when the assessment is to be done in a principled or credible way.
- An example of this is the set of rules and regulations to be followed by learners as well as invigilators and assessors during tests and examinations. All these rules and regulations have **one major purpose** in mind – **the assessment must be credible** – the assessment process must be reliable, the method (test or examination) must be used in a fair manner, and the evidence produced or generated by the learners has to be valid and authentic. In addition, the rules and regulations help us as school management, educators, and assessors to remain in control of the test or examination.

It is therefore imperative that all school managers, educators, assessors, invigilators, moderators and administrative staff involved in assessments at schools not only follow protocols, policies, and procedures blindly but that they do so with a clear understanding of the importance of doing so, i.e. to remain true to all principles of assessment in everything they do!

- The third is that **no assessment can ever be perfect**, i.e. completely true to all principles of assessment in all respects, simply because every assessment is a human endeavour and therefore prone to human error and human weaknesses. **Every assessment has to be credible, however, in spite of this!**

It is of the utmost importance that you have complete clarity about the credibility of an assessment.



Activity 1.7.1.7

The principles of assessment: credibility

The term “credibility” implies trustworthiness, reliability, integrity, authority, standing, and sincerity.

Consider the list of assessment principles as described by SAQA and reflected in the prescribed text again and answer the questions below. When you read the principles again, start with those related to the assessment process, then move on to those related to a method and, finally, on to those related to assessment evidence.

Consider the principles related to process and answer the following:

- Can an assessment process that is not systematic, and that follows a haphazard, chaotic and disorganised sequence, be relied upon to give trustworthy results?
- Can **an assessment process that is not transparent and** that is vague and unclear about various aspects of the intended assessment process be trustworthy?
- Can an inconsistent assessment process that renders different results under similar circumstances be trusted?
- What conclusion can we draw from these answers regarding the **reliability** of the assessment process?

Now consider the principles related to assessment methods and answer the following:

- *Would it be fair to all learners if we were to use methods that are not appropriate, i.e. that are not suited to the content and context as prescribed in the curriculum themes, topics, and sub-topics?*
- *Would all learners be treated the same way if we as school managers, educators, invigilators, and assessors were to lose control over assessment resources and procedures?*
- *Would learners be treated fairly if we did not integrate assessment tasks with what was done during learning and what would be expected of them in life and in the workplace?*
- *Would learners be treated the same if we were to apply favouritism to some learners before the assessment was done, during the assessment and afterward when we marked their work?*
- *What conclusion can we draw from these answers regarding the fairness of the assessment methods used?*

Now consider the principles related to assessment evidence and answer the following:

- *Would evidence that is not directly related to the content, themes, topics and sub-topics in the curriculum be considered valid for assessment purposes?*
- *Would evidence that was generated some weeks or months ago be valid for making judgments and evaluations on learner performances today?*
- *Would evidence that was generated by someone other than the particular learner whose work you are assessing, or evidence generated with the help of another learner, friend, parent, or whoever, be valid for making assessment judgments and evaluations on the learner's ability?*
- *Would evidence that covers only some of the topics in the curriculum, and does not address all skills and values prescribed in the curriculum, is enough to make valid judgments and evaluations on learner performances?*
- *What conclusion can we draw from these answers regarding the validity of the assessment evidence generated, gathered and evaluated or judged?*



Rethink and reflect

You would have learnt from this activity that:

- *The **reliability** of the assessment process is enhanced by the process also being as systematic and open as possible. Of the three principles related to process, **reliability** seems key.*
- *The **fairness** of assessment methods is enhanced by appropriateness, manageability, and degree of integration. Of the four principles related to the assessment methods used, **fairness** seems key.*
- *The more current, authentic and sufficient the **evidence**, the more **valid** it becomes – and the more directly it is related to curriculum requirements. This allows the*

*assessor to make sound assessment judgments and evaluations of learner performances. Of the four principles related to assessment evidence, **validity** seems to be the key.*

No wonder, then, that SAQA uses the following equation to define the credibility of an assessment:

$$\text{RELIABILITY} + \text{FAIRNESS} + \text{VALIDITY} + \text{MANAGEABILITY} = \text{CREDIBILITY}$$

When can an assessment be regarded as credible?

An assessment is credible when four conditions are met, namely:

- *The **overall assessment process is reliable** and would yield similar results time and again, even when used by other assessors.*
- *The **assessment method** of generating, gathering and evaluating assessment evidence is **fair** and treats all learners the same before, during and after the assessment.*
- *The **assessment evidence** generated, gathered and evaluated or judged, is **valid**, i.e. directly related to what is prescribed in the curriculum and addressed in teaching and learning opportunities in the classroom.*
- *The **assessment was manageable**, i.e. the resources and procedures were **under the control** of the school management, assessors and other staff involved in the assessment throughout the entire assessment process.*

*This means that **every assessment you do has to be credible**, in spite of minor weaknesses that may occur in doing the assessment.*

*It also means that the **moderator will assure the quality of your assessments by ensuring that at least the four critical principles of assessment have adhered to that is: reliability, fairness, validity, and manageability.***

You will have noted that the prescribed text also refers to other principles of assessment in the text. The following activity is designed to make sense of these so-called other principles.



Activity 1.7.1.8

Other principles of assessment

Compare the "other" principles of assessment' to the 11 principles identified by SAQA. You will note that every so-called "other" principle is in fact very similar to one of the SAQA principles of assessment.

Copy and complete the following table in your workbook file:

A few examples have been provided below to give you an idea of what to do:

"Other" principle similar to:	SAQA principle of assessment:
Questions clear and suitable	Appropriate methods
Realistic time limits	Fair methods in terms of time allocation

**Comment**

I think that SAQA has done a splendid job of identifying, categorising and describing the principles of assessment. Any so-called "other" assessment principle can be incorporated into the categories and definitions provided by SAQA. I also think, however, that some of the SAQA descriptions and definitions could have been simplified by referring to the essence or core of each principle in ordinary terms rather than in technically correct but otherwise rather wide definitions.

Here are my simplified definitions or descriptions:

Systematic

The process follows a logical step-by-step sequence, reflecting planning, then conducting, then feedback, then a review of the assessment in the sequence.

Open

The process is transparent to all stakeholders and even gives learners the opportunity to contribute to the planning of an assessment.

Reliable

The process is consistent and yields similar results under similar circumstances, time after time, even when used by other assessors.

Appropriate

The assessment methods used for generating, gathering and evaluating or judging the learner's work are suited to the content, skills, outcomes or topics prescribed in the curriculum and taught in class.

Fair

The methods treat all learners exactly the same in terms of time, language and assessment environment before, during and after the assessment method is applied.

Manageable

The assessor and relevant role-players remain in control of all assessment resources and procedures throughout the entire assessment process.

Integrated

The method requires learners to complete activities that are the same as or similar to those done during learning – or similar to what would be expected in the world of work.

Valid

The evidence generated by learners, and gathered and evaluated or judged by the assessor, is directly related to content, topics, sub-topics, skills, and values prescribed in the curriculum and taught and learnt in class.

Current

The evidence is "fresh", that is, it is produced at the time (or very shortly before or after) the time of evaluation or judgment.

Authentic

The evidence is generated by the learner assessed and nobody else AND no assistance whatsoever is given to the learner when the evidence is generated.

Sufficient

Enough evidence is generated by the learner and gathered by the assessor for the assessor to be able to make justifiable evaluations and judgments.

The issue of the credibility of assessments is crucial. Everyone involved in assessment in school contexts, over and above the educator acting as an assessor, should be well informed on this issue and be able to play his or her part for our schools to deliver credible assessments every time assessments are done!

The role of the moderator in ensuring that all assessments are, in fact, credible is of the utmost importance and deserving of much more attention.

Unfortunately, in my view, too few opportunities exist in a very packed school programme for all stakeholders in assessment to pause and reflect on assessment practice in terms of the assessment principles. It seems that the CAPS has planned every aspect of delivery in such detail that there is very little room for reflection, revision, redesign, and adjustment of assessment practice. The danger exists that educators are now expected to follow the curriculum and assessment protocols blindly and that adherence to the policy may become more important than being a reflective educator and assessor. The educator acting as an assessor would have to create opportunities to reflect on the credibility of his or her assessments often and regularly under the guidance of an experienced mentor, moderator or manager.

The role of the moderator in achieving credibility of assessments

The National Protocol for Assessment 2013 states the following regarding moderation:

- Moderation should ensure that the quality and standard of the School-Based Assessment, as contemplated in Chapter 4 of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, have been met from Grade 4 onwards.
- In Grade 12, School-Based Assessment must be moderated by the Department of Basic Education, the accredited assessment body, and Umalusi.

- Moderation should ensure that the quality and standard of the Practical Assessment Tasks, as contemplated in Chapter 4 of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, have been met.
- In Grade 12, Practical Assessment Tasks must be moderated by experts in each subject and quality assured by Umalusi

Chapter 4 of the CAPS for Tourism indicates that:

- Grades 10 and 11 tasks are internally moderated. The subject advisor should, however, moderate a sample of these tasks during his or her school visits, to verify the standard of the internal moderation.
- Grade 12 tasks need to be externally moderated. This process will be managed by the province.

The policy requirements regarding moderation are clearly reflected in both the National Protocol for Assessment and in the CAPS, Chapter 4 for every subject.

Assessment practice is done by ordinary human beings. As such it is inherently exposed to human limitations and even occasional human error. No assessment can ever be perfect, i.e. in all aspects true to all eleven principles of assessment. In fact, if it were possible to uphold all the principles of assessment every time an assessment is done, there would be no need for moderating or assuring the quality of an assessment. Every single assessment has to be credible in spite of limitations. In fact, moderation – in essence – is ensuring the credibility of assessments.

In layman's terms, credibility refers to the believability of assessments, i.e. whether we can believe the assessment judgment or not.

As indicated earlier, SAQA refers to four principles of assessment being upheld, namely, fairness, validity, reliability, and practicability or manageability, to result in a credible assessment. This means that the assessment process should be reliable or consistent, the methods used should be applied in a fair manner, the evidence gathered and judged should be valid, and the assessment resources should be under the control of the assessor throughout the entire assessment.

Also bear in mind that credibility is relative, i.e. that it can always be improved or enhanced when the same kind of assessment is done again. This is another reason why assessment and moderation should be done concurrently. Moderators should never moderate assessments only after the fact. The entire assessment process should be moderated from preparation for assessment, through the gathering and judging of evidence and the providing and obtaining of feedback to reviewing assessments.

Moderators should, in fact, determine whether an assessment is or was credible or not. If not, the moderator will overturn the assessor's judgment and indicate what steps need to be taken to ensure credibility. If the assessment is or was credible, the moderator will uphold the assessor's judgment and may indicate what could be done to improve on credibility when such an assessment is done again in future.

When designing an assessment task you may find it difficult to cover the curriculum, pitch the assessment at the appropriate standard, test higher-order thinking skills, give clear instructions, avoid gender and cultural bias, and so forth. It is therefore very important that your assessment task should be moderated before it is implemented. The moderator in school contexts may be a head of the department or a colleague teaching the same subject and grade.

The moderator assures the quality of the entire assessment task – the guidelines, the difficulty level of task itself, application of a taxonomy such as Bloom's taxonomy to ensure a variety of questions or tasks are included, the mark allocation, the assessment instrument or memorandum, time allocation, etc.

The moderator will also check the assessment documentation against the school's policy and requirements regarding the technical layout, format etc.

The moderator may suggest improvements before the assessment is done by the learners. These improvements have to be implemented in time to ensure that the best quality assessment will apply.

The quality assurance before the assessment task is done will go a long way in ensuring that the teacher will carry out a credible assessment when the learners' responses are assessed.

After the assessment, task has been done by the learners and after the teacher has assessed the responses, the batch of assessments – along with the scripts or assignments completed by all the learners being assessed – is sent to the moderator. The moderator undertakes quality assurance of the assessor's ability to make sound assessment judgments and evaluations. This is achieved by selecting a random sample of the learners' work and marking and assessing it again, using the same assessment tool that the teacher in the role of assessor used.

Should there be no significant differences in the scores or judgments made by both the assessor and the moderator, the assessment can be regarded as having been credible and the moderator will communicate this to the assessor.

Should there be significant differences, or should the moderator identify inconsistencies in the assessor's marking or assessment, however, the moderator may instruct the assessor to remark sections of the work to ensure that all learners are treated in a fair manner and that appropriate standard are maintained.

It is also important to bear in mind that assessment and moderation should be planned and prepared for at the same time. In fact, as an educator and assessor, you should have a healthy and open relationship with your moderator. Moderation in the current context in the South African recognition system specifically moves away from a judgemental and top-down approach towards an innately developmental, supportive and advisory approach. Using this approach, moderators are seen as partners in credible assessments and the credibility of assessment is seen as a developmental issue, i.e. if the moderator advises, supports and develops the assessor, rather than inspects and finds faults, then the credibility of the assessor's assessments will improve over time. The same will apply regarding the credibility of the overall system if all moderation is done following this approach.

There seems to be some confusion among education, training and development practitioners as to whether a moderator needs to be a subject matter expert or not. It is astounding that there are voices that argue that a moderator needs only to quality assure the process of assessment and therefore does not need to be a subject matter specialist. This is often the case in schools where the HOD may not be a subject matter expert in some of the subjects he or she is heading but still, insists on moderating the educator's work. This notion flies in the face of all principles of credibility. In terms of ordinary logic, both assessors and moderators need to have evaluative expertise. This means that the assessor and moderator should have deep subject matter understanding in the field in which they assess and moderate as well as a clear understanding of the curriculum requirements and general philosophy regarding assessment.

Concluding remark on credibility

It is the moderator's work to make sure, therefore, that the methods used are applied fairly by assessors, that the evidence gathered and judged is valid, that the overall assessment process applied is reliable and that the assessor remains or remained in control of the resources throughout the entire assessment. It is the moderator's task to decide whether an assessment is or was credible or not, and if not, what should be done to remedy the situation.

The following activity serves to consolidate and contextualise moderation in your context.



Activity 1.7.1.9 **Credibility and moderation**

Conduct a short interview with a member of a School Assessment Team at a school to which you have access. Contextualise the interview by indicating that you have to find out how moderation is done in practice, and what impact it has on the quality of assessment. You may even answer all the questions yourself, should you have sufficient experience to do so.

Ask the following questions and record the answers in your workbook file.

- 1. Who is the moderator for any one of the subjects you teach or would teach? Refer to the position of the person, and not the name.*
- 2. Has this person been trained to do moderation? Explain.*
- 3. Does the school have a clear moderation policy?*
- 4. Are teachers required to submit all formal assessment tasks to their moderator before the assessment task is done by the learners?*
- 5. What format is used to by the moderator to communicate his or her moderation results to the assessor?*
- 6. Does the moderator have access to the assessor and learners during the assessment, i.e. while the learners are doing the assessment task?*
- 7. What is guidance and/or support given to the assessor when he or she has to assess the learner's scripts or responses?*
- 8. How does the moderator sample the batch of assessment tasks to be moderated?*
- 9. Is the moderator supportive, constructive and developmental in his or her approach, or is he or she judgemental and authoritative? Explain.*
- 10. Would you say that there is a sense of partnership and teamwork between the moderator and the assessors he or she is responsible for?*

Study the responses and write a short paragraph on the effectiveness of moderation in the school you have engaged with.

Ask the same questions (1–10) with regard to the external moderators from the Department of Basic Education who moderate internal assessments and moderation.



Comment

I think that the principles of assessment should always be in the back of our minds when we assess our learners.

I must bear in mind that when I am a teacher or educator facilitating learning, my conduct needs to demonstrate that I am warm, approachable, helpful, kind, caring, supportive, developmental and person-oriented. In these ways am like a parent, brother or sister to my learners.

When I am assessing my learners' work, however, I have to be more distant, objective, task-and evidence-oriented, unemotional, calculated and judgemental. I am more like a judge to my learners.

Obviously, I will become warm and kind and approachable again after the assessment has been done so that my feedback and support given afterward will be encouraging and caring again.

Because of the importance of assessment in the lives of my learners, I should welcome the support, guidance, and direction provided by the moderator. In fact, I should regard him or her as my mentor and seek his or her opinion often and build a professional relationship with him or her, in the best interest of the learners and towards my own development as a professional educator and assessor.

I should always remember that no assessment can ever be perfect, yet every single assessment I am responsible for has to be credible!



Rethink and reflect

You will have learnt a lot about assessment principles in the series of activities you have just completed.

There is another very important issue that needs to be addressed regarding the principles of assessment.

Everything argued about the principles of assessment stands on the premise that you, the educator, are the assessor and that you are a subject matter expert.

A few questions arise:

Are the principles of assessment valid for self, peer and group assessments also?

In these kinds of assessments, the learners become the assessors also, not so?

Can self-assessments, peer assessments, and group assessments be credible?

The answer lies in the following truth:

Only a subject matter expert with the capacity to be really objective can assess with real authority, resulting in credible assessments.

This means that the credibility of self, peer and group assessments – in which the learners assess their own, or each other's work – will always be questionable. Learners do not yet have the required subject matter expertise to make consistently credible judgments. Learners also do not have the capacity to be really completely objective. In fact, one of the characteristics of being a child is being subjective and not having the maturity to judge or evaluate accurately.

Does this mean that self, peer and group assessments are worthless? Definitely not! We must bear in mind that the purpose of self, peer and group assessments is to use assessment activities for learning. Such assessments are always done as formative assessments and never as summative assessments.

Only formal assessments assessed by you, the educator, may be used for progression or promotion purposes.

The purpose of the assessment will determine who the assessor will be. If the purpose is to learn from the experience and to understand the subject content, assessment criteria and context better, then a formative assessment will be done and any combination of educator, self, peer or group assessment may be useful. Then it does not matter that the credibility is questionable as the results will not be recorded for progression or promotion purposes.

If the purpose is to determine what the learners have learnt during a term, cycle, or academic year, then a summative assessment is done. In this case, only the subject matter expert – that is you as the educator – can be the judge and evaluator of learner performances. All the principles of assessment will then apply and your assessment has to be credible.

The reflection on the credibility of assessment, as well as the need for quality assurance or moderation, clearly indicates that on a practical level, the way an assessment is conducted by learners, educators, moderators and other role-players needs to be clear to all involved. The next activity helps you to understand the relevance of assessment guidelines.

Activity 1.7.2



Assessment guidelines

Study section 1.7.2 in the prescribed text. Source an assessment that was used by you or other assessors in your subject recently, such as a formal assessment (test or examination) or a research task (assignment) that the learners had to do. Study the entire document and identify the assessment guidelines given in the assessment.

Answer the following questions:

- Are the guidelines sufficient for learners to know exactly what is expected of them in the assessment task? If your answer is “no”, add some guidelines that will address the weaknesses you have identified.
- What guidelines for each of the following role-players could be added?
 - invigilator
 - assessors
 - moderator
 - data capture

Would the guidelines to these role-players be included in the actual document given to the learners?



Comment

I think that assessment guidelines supplement assessment criteria. All role-players in assessment need to be very clear indeed regarding their roles and responsibilities regarding a particular assessment activity. Assessment guidelines are usually very practical in nature and should be addressed specifically to the particular role-player for which the guidelines are intended.

Although it may be true that learners and other role-players become more independent as they become more experienced and think that they do not need guidelines, it may also lead to misunderstandings and improper assessment practices if these guidelines are not followed to the letter! The educator acting as an assessor should therefore strive to strike a balance between what role-players can be expected to know about the intended assessment, and for which they, therefore, may not need guidelines, and what aspects need to be clarified so as to avoid confusion regarding the practical issues.

Next, we scrutinise continuous assessment as well as several other, related, concepts.

Activity 1.7.3 - 1.7.9



Continuous assessment and related concepts

Study the text under 1.7.3–1.7.7 as well as figure 1.5 in the prescribed text and indicate which of the statements below are true and which are false.

Statement	T	F
<i>Continuous assessment is part of diagnostic assessment.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment is part of formative assessment.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment excludes summative assessment.</i>		
<i>The baseline assessment is done at the end of a learning process.</i>		
<i>Formative assessments are used to answer the question: How much did they learn?</i>		

<i>Continuous assessment includes all assessments done during a programme.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment starts with a baseline assessment and includes other kinds of assessment.</i>		
<i>Summative assessments are done at the end of the learning process, usually after a learning cycle, term or year.</i>		
<i>When the assessment is done during the learning process, it is a formative assessment.</i>		
<i>Diagnostic assessment takes place at the start and at the end of the learning process.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment is an approach rather than a type of assessment.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment usually ends with summative assessment.</i>		
<i>Formative assessment is an assessment of learning more than assessment for learning.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment illustrates that assessment is integrated with learning.</i>		
<i>Diagnostic assessment is formative rather than summative.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment illustrates that learning is part of the assessment.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment is more formative and less summative.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment is focused on the learning process rather than the result.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment is more formal than informal.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment uses quantitative feedback approaches.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment mostly gives qualitative feedback.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment is more criterion-referenced and less norm-referenced.</i>		
<i>Continuous assessment is no longer used in the CAPS context.</i>		
<i>Internal, external classroom, formal and informal assessment are part of the continuous assessment in the CAPS context.</i>		
<i>Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is not really done in school contexts.</i>		



Comment

I think that we have to understand all these concepts very well when we act as both educators and assessors. We also have to use the terminology correctly whenever we interact with one another and other stakeholders about assessment. An assessment literate person is very clear in his or her own mind about these concepts and always seeks to help everyone understand exactly what is meant when this terminology is used.

I also think that terminology carries our thinking and that our thinking determines our actions. We are not only practitioners of assessment. As educators, we are also scholars, students and, lifelong learners. We study assessment at an academic level in order to practice it more effectively and in a justifiable manner. Understanding all the terminology related to assessment is important to me as an academic as well.

We need to return to the analogy of assessment being the vehicle that carries the teaching and learning process towards the destination. The authors of the prescribed text regard criterion-referenced assessment as similar to mileposts next to the road, indicating how far we have traveled and how far we still have to go to get to the destination. The next activity helps you to understand this analogy even better.



Activity 1.8 Criterion-referenced assessments as mileposts

Study section 1.8.1 in the prescribed text. Revisit activity 1.4.2 in this guide and reflect on how assessment criteria are used in assessments.

Make use of the example you used in Activity 1.4.2 and indicate how the assessment criteria can be used as a reference to indicate how far you and your learners have traveled towards the destination and how far you still have to travel to reach the destination.

Reflect on the following statement:

Norm-referencing can be used as mileposts equally well as criterion referenced assessments.

When you take pictures of scenes, people and events along a journey, these pictures, (photos and/or videos) have to be recorded. You would usually record these on your smartphone or on a camera, not so? You would later share your experiences with someone who may not have been on the journey with you, and then you would refer to your recordings and share thoughts with them.

Similarly, when we assess learners, we must use evidence on which we base our judgments. We record the evidence and judgments in order to justify our assessments. We share our judgments with various stakeholders for various purposes.

The following activity serves to illustrate this analogy in the CAPS context.



Activity 1.9 Collecting evidence, recording, and reporting

Analyse the National Protocol for Assessment as well as the CAPS for the subject you teach or intend to teach. Then complete the table below to illustrate how evidence, judgments and evaluations are recorded and how these should be reported in the CAPS context.

<i>Evidence to be produced by learners in a particular assessment task</i>	<i>Subject:</i>
	<i>Evidence:</i>
<i>How will the evidence be recorded?</i>	<i>Instruments:</i>
<i>How will the judgments/evaluation be made by the educator and assessor?</i>	<i>Instruments:</i>
<i>How will learning and teaching be improved?</i>	
<i>Who is the audience?</i>	
<i>Why was the assessment done? (What was the purpose?)</i>	
<i>Which information will be communicated?</i>	

The activity that follows links up with what you have just done by indicating HOW we should provide feedback on assessment.



Activity 1.10 Keeping on track – constructive feedback

Carefully study table 1.3 comparing counterproductive and constructive feedback in the prescribed text. Also, reflect on an assessment you may have done or may still plan to do with learners in your subject. Consider various possibilities with regard to learner performances in the task – obviously, some learners will have done (or will do) better than others.

Also, consider policy requirements as described in the National Protocol for Assessment and CAPS for your subject.

Give an example from your context of every guideline for the constructive feedback provided in the table to illustrate your understanding of the guidelines. In some cases, your response may be an actual example, and in other cases, it may be simply a brief explanation.

Reflect on the use of the seven-point rating scale prescribed in the protocol and in CAPS. Which of the counterproductive feedback practices may occur when we use the scale? Which constructive practices are evident? Explain every response.



Rethink and reflect

You will have noted that the use of the seven-point rating scale is prone to some of the counterproductive ways of providing feedback to learners.

The scale is based predominantly on marks and grades rather than on criteria. At the same time, the qualitative descriptions, excellent, meritorious, moderate, etc., are very vague and do not say much in terms of explaining how future performances can be improved in terms of measurable criteria.

It seems prudent, then, not to regard the scale as the only tool to use when giving feedback. In fact, the scale should be used for recording and reporting purposes, rather than for qualitative feedback on particular assessment tasks.

The educator acting as an assessor should use the scale as a point of departure for giving constructive feedback to learners on specific assessment tasks. All the guidelines for constructive feedback should be followed in what we do as educators – after we have recorded the learners' performances in terms of the scale.

In practical terms, this means that, in addition to the score achieved in terms of the scale, the assessor needs to provide prompt, written, task-involving, criterion-referenced, scaffolded, and balanced feedback in a positive tone that is focused on feed-forward as well as feedback – especially when formative assessments are done.

In the analogy of assessment as a vehicle taking the learning process forward, several potholes are identified. These potholes make progress on the journey slow and difficult and, in certain cases, downright dangerous! The following activity serves to wrap your mind around some of these potholes on the teachings, learning-, and assessment road.



Activity 1.11 Potholes

Copy the table below into your workbook file and complete it to demonstrate your understanding of some of the potholes you may experience as an assessor. Do this after you have studied the relevant section in the prescribed text.

Pothole	Example in my subject	How can I limit the effect?
Driver fatigue		
Overloading		
Speeding		
Taking the wrong turn		

In the analogy of assessment as a vehicle taking the learning process forward, three steep hills are used as analogies for contested issues or problem areas that should be considered when dealing with assessment in an educational context.

The next activity looks into these three issues.



Activity 1.12 Steep hills – contested issues

After you have studied the relevant section in the prescribed text, copy and complete the table below to demonstrate your understanding of some of the steep hills you may experience as an assessor.

Steep hill (issue)	Challenges/Limitations	Benefits/Advantages
Standardised assessment		
High-stakes assessment		
Recognition of excellence		
Comment on how relevant these issues are in your context. Include suggestions to address these issues in the assessment practice in your context. Bear in mind that CAPS and the NPA provide the policy only as minimum requirements – we can go beyond what is prescribed, but should never stop short of that.		

In the analogy of assessment as a vehicle taking the learning process forward, it is recommended that, as assessors, we take a breather every now and then and also refuel before we go on.

The next activity helps you to reflect on the issues raised.



Activity 1.13 Stopping along the way – refresh and refuel

Study the analogy in section 1.13. Critique it and expand on it by responding to the following:

- Does the analogy that learning is the fuel for assessment as a vehicle, make sense for you? Explain.

2. Can you think of a more appropriate analogy? Explain.

In the analogy of assessment as a vehicle taking the learning process forward, reaching the destination includes three aspects. The following activity serves to identify and contextualise these three aspects.



Activity 1.14 Reaching the destination

Copy the table below into your workbook file and complete it to demonstrate your understanding of the three aspects relevant to the assessment destination. Do this after you have studied the relevant section in the prescribed text.

Aspects of the destination	Example of my subject
Learning assessment	
Performance assessment	
Promotion/Certification	

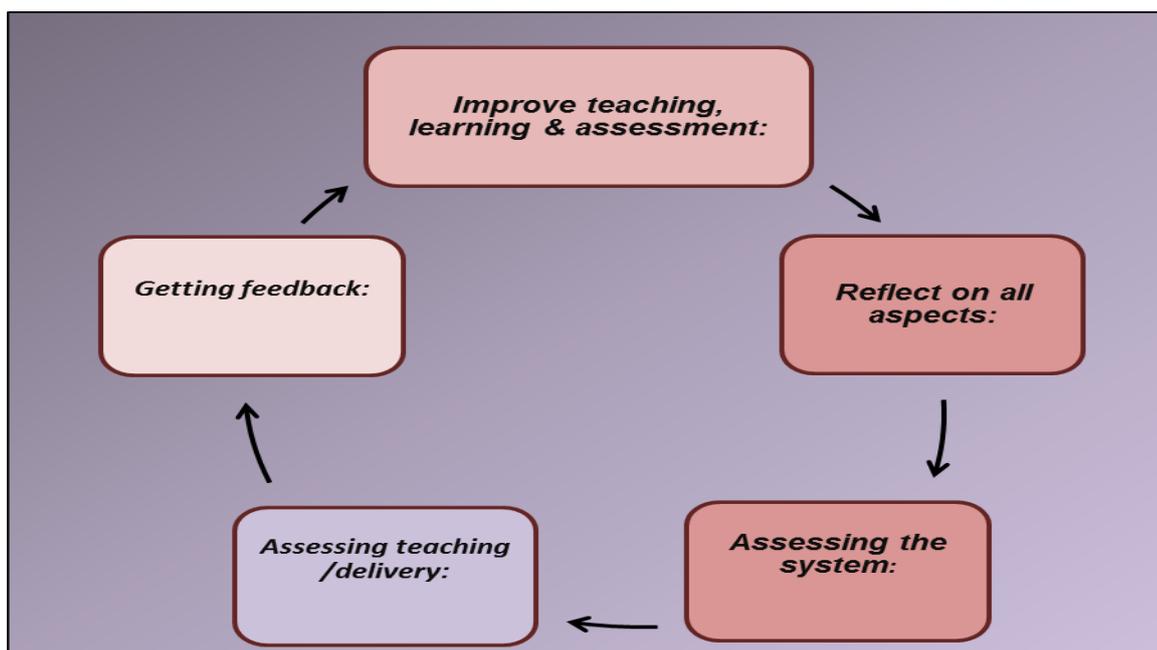
Section 1.15 of the prescribed text uses planning for the next journey as an analogy for the action-reflection approach followed in most endeavours these days. The next activity requires you to apply the action-reflection model to the assessment context.



Activity 1.15 Action-reflection cycle in an assessment context

Copy the diagram provided here into your workbook file. Copy and add content to each segment in it to reflect how assessment is improved over time by means of the action-reflection cycle approach in your context.

Assessment as an action-reflection cycle



In the last section of the chapter, the authors refer to best practices in various countries to give an overview of what can be done in terms of high-quality assessment. Obviously, the idea is that we should work towards these best practices in the South African assessment system, thus reflecting our desire to be the best we can be.

The last activity in this study unit requires that you reflect on these practices and indicate which are attainable in our context.

Activity 1.16  **The way forward**

Study section 1.16 in the prescribed text and consider what you have learnt by working through all the activities in this chapter of the study guide.

Write an academic essay of 500 words entitled:

Best practices in assessment in South Africa – current challenges and future rewards

Your response must indicate which of the lessons contained in an overview of best practice elsewhere in the world are already incorporated in CAPS and the NPA and which are still ideals to work on.

Your essay must be structured in terms of the academic convention (use headings and sub-headings, refer to sources in the text whenever these are used and provide the essay with a proper bibliography).

Conclusion

Study the conclusion to chapter 1 of the prescribed text. It starts with a remarkable quote and ends with a comment that we are assessors, yet we must always be learners as well. In the next chapter of this guide, you will learn more about assessment in the pre-school and foundation phases.

Study Unit 2

Assessment in the pre-school and foundation phases

Introduction

Students enrolled for this module often ask why they should study assessment in all the phases in the school system if they are not ever going to assess learners in all phases, but only in one, or maybe two, of the phases.

Why must I know how learners are assessed in the foundation phase if I am going to teach in the senior years of the FET phases?

Why can the module not be presented in such a way that students study only the first chapter on general assessment issues and theory and then only the chapter relevant to the phase they are going to teach?

The introductory activity is designed to answer such questions.

Introductory Activity



Assessment in all phases

Reflect on the questions asked above, the reasons why you enrolled in the course (PGCE or B.Ed), what it means to be a student at tertiary level, and what it means to be a student of assessment.

Answer the following questions in your workbook file under the heading “Understanding Assessment in all Phases of Schooling”:

1. When do you regard someone as a well-educated person? Refer to being a specialist vs being a generalist.
2. When do you regard someone as a well-balanced expert in a field? Refer to the balance between general and specialised knowledge.
3. Is the task of the university to prepare you for your task as an educator only, or should we enhance your abilities as a post-graduate student also?
4. Why should you know how to assess only the learners in the phase you teach?
5. Why should you know how learners in the preceding phase are assessed?
6. Why should you know how learners are assessed in the next phase?
7. If you were to be promoted to the position of head of department, deputy principal or principal, would a wide and deep understanding of assessment in all phases be useful? Explain.



Comment

I think that over-specialisation limits rather than benefits a person. A well-educated person can hold his or her own in a variety of fields in spite of being qualified (specialised) in one area only.

The phases into which schooling is organised are based on real differences in the learning and development of children from birth, through early childhood, pre-adolescence and adolescence to adulthood, emanating

from well-documented research in psychology, sociology, and education. These differences should be understood and applied in education and assessment also. This does not mean that education and assessment in one phase are completely and absolutely different and totally foreign to that of the next phase in schooling. In fact, children move through these phases in a natural flow of development and growth, and every individual child at his or her particular pace.

This means that a well-rounded educator and assessor is properly informed about assessment in all phases, and applies his or her trade in the particular phase in which he or she teaches at a particular time.

Managers in education should be well informed about assessment in all phases to be able to manage both assessment and educators in any particular phase with insight, dignity, and respect.

As a student of this module, you should know and understand assessment in all phases, but you will apply such knowledge and understanding in one particular phase only.

It is the intention of this module that you will be very well informed about assessment in education in general and be able to practice assessment responsibly in the phase or phases of your choice.



Rethink and reflect

You will notice that the activities that follow are sometimes grouped together to integrate some of the sections of the prescribed text. Note that the numbering of the activities in this study guide follows the structure and numbering of the prescribed text.

The following activity serves to introduce assessment in the foundation phase to you.



Activity 2.1

Study section 2.1 of the prescribed text. Respond to the following in your workbook file:

1. *Identify nine views on assessment in the foundation phase expressed by authors referenced by the author of Chapter 2 of the prescribed text.*
2. *Draft your own definition of assessment in the early childhood/foundation phase, using these views.*
3. *Compare your definition to the definition of assessment you generated in activity 1.2.3. List significant differences between the two definitions.*
4. *What do we learn from this with regards to assessment in the foundation phase?*
5. *Compare the illustration in figure 2.1 to the diagram you worked on in activity 1.15 earlier.*



Comment

I think that the views expressed by the authors quoted clearly indicate that assessment is much more than merely one task among many others to be performed by teachers. They clearly indicate the inextricably intertwined nature of teaching and assessment. They also clearly indicate and the need to understand how learners think, learn, develop and behave differently as they grow through the stages of development – and how this needs to be taken into account when we teach and assess – and how we need to adjust our teaching according to what is revealed in our assessment of learners.

Activity 2.2 focuses on the nature of learning by learners in early childhood, pre-school and in the foundation years.



Activity 2.2 **Assessment during different phases**

The author uses an example to illustrate how teaching and assessment are integrated into early childhood education. Study the example carefully and reflect on how this approach negates the notion of “one size fits all”.

What are the implications of presenting themes in an individualised approach for the educator acting as an assessor? Think of observing learners in teaching-learning contexts, teacher-learner ratios, time, resources, recording of assessment results and using assessment results as you formulate your answer.



Comment

I think that we need to consider the characteristics of the foundation phase learner (preschool and early childhood) in terms of developmental milestones to be able to understand teaching and assessment in this phase of schooling.

Now that you have some understanding of the kind of learners teachers have to teach and assess in the foundation phase, reflecting on assessing preschool and foundation phase learners may make more sense. The following activity is focused in this.



Activities 2.3-2.4 **What to assess and what to know about assessment**

Study sections 2.3 and 2.4 in the prescribed text, as well as the introductory part of the CAPS for foundation phase. Focus specifically on 2.4.3, “Assessing Foundation Phase Learners”, as well as on the requirements in “CAPS Foundation Phase”.

In your workbook file make a list of at least five features of the foundation phase curriculum and indicate why you think every feature is important. Refer in your discussion to the characteristics of foundation phase learners.

Do this activity by copying and completing the table below.

Features of teaching and assessing learners in the foundation phase

Feature of teaching and assessing in the foundation phase	Corresponding characteristic of learners age 7–9 years

Given the background provided in the previous activities, it is now time to consider why we should assess, when we assess, how we assess and who the assessors are in the foundation phase. The following three activities have been designed to assist you in understanding these questions.



Activity 2.5 Why should we assess in the foundation phase?

Focus on the developmental nature of learning as understood in Piaget’s theory and consider the reasoning regarding the question, “Why should we assess?” as presented in section 2.5 of the prescribed text.

Summarise your thinking in this regard in two short paragraphs in your workbook file.



Activity 2.6 When do we assess in the foundation phase?

Study section 2.6 in the prescribed text and summarise your views under the following heading in your workbook file:

“Continuous assessment – a necessity in the foundation phase”



Activity 2.7 How do we assess in the foundation phase?

Study the reflections on how we assess in the foundation phase as contained in sections 2.7.1–2.7.7 and present your answer to the question: “How should we assess in the foundation phase?” by means of a mind map in your workbook file. Place the question in the center of your mind map and represent every facet of your answer using the sub-headings 2.7.1 to 2.7.7, as the “legs of the spider” in your mind map. The amount of detail to be included in your mind map is left to you to decide.



Activity 2.8 Who are the assessors in the foundation phase?

Within the context of this module, it is obvious that the teacher is the primary assessor in the foundation phase. Study section 2.8 and section 2.18 in the prescribed text and do the following in

your workbook file: List all assessors referred to in the two sections and comment on the relevance and importance of each with regard to teaching, learning, promotion and progression, and attending to special needs of learners. Do this activity by copying and completing the table below. (Note that a few rows have already been completed so as to give you an idea of what to do.)

Assessors involved in and used in foundation phase contexts

Who does assessment?	<i>Is the assessor relevant to, and therefore doing assessment as part of or for the purpose of...</i>				
	Supporting learning?	Assisting teaching?	Promotion & progression?	Special needs?	Identifying & Addressing barriers
<i>Teacher</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Social worker</i>	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
<i>Learner (self-assessment)</i>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No



Activities 2.9 - 2.11 **Background to observation as primary method**

Read sections 2.9–2.11 to enhance your understanding of the assessment of young learners. Focus your attention on the assessment of foundation phase learners. You will notice that the text refers to two categories – assessment in the pre-school years and school assessment. Our focus is on school assessment. You will also notice that most of what is shared in these sections is very similar to corresponding aspects we have already studied in Chapter 1 of the text and study unit 1 of this guide. Regard this activity as a revision exercise.



Activity 2.12 **Observation as the primary method of assessment**

Study sections 2.12, 2.15 and 2.16 of the prescribed text and summarise the views expressed using the following structure:

Title of your summary: Observation as primary assessment method in the foundation phase

Content: Summarise the content of the sections in brackets using sub-headings.

- Observation as an assessment tool for useful assessment (sections 2.12 and 2.15)
- The importance and purpose of observation (sections 2.12.1 and 2.12.4)
- The observation process (Section 2.12.16)
- Guidelines for doing observation (sections 2.12.2; 2.12.3 and 2.14)
- Reflection on using observation in other phases of schooling



Activity 2.13 **Types and methods**

Compare the assessment types listed in section 2.13 and the methods listed in 2.18 with what you learned about these in study unit 1 of this guide. Use the table that follows and focus on how these types of assessment and methods are used or applied in the foundation phase.

Assessment types and methods in the foundation phase

Concept	Applied how in the foundation phase?
<i>Baseline assessment</i>	
<i>Diagnostic assessment</i>	
<i>Formative assessment</i>	
<i>Summative assessment</i>	
<i>Teacher assessment</i>	
<i>Self-assessment</i>	
<i>Peer-assessment</i>	
<i>Group assessment</i>	



Activity 2.14 **Parent involvement**

Parent involvement in assessment is not important in the foundation phase only. Study section 2.19 and list practical ways in which what is proposed can be done in your school context. Do not focus on the foundation phase context only – use the table below to provide practical suggestions for enhancing parent involvement in any and all phases of schooling.

Parent involvement in assessment

Aspect mentioned in literature	Practical guidelines for enhancing parent involvement in assessment specifically
<i>Obtaining specific information from parents</i>	
<i>Getting to know parents</i>	
<i>Keeping regular contact with parents</i>	
<i>Organising discussion forums</i>	
<i>Conducting home visits</i>	
<i>Using a regular written communication</i>	



Activity 2.15 **Assessment techniques and tools**

Read section 2.20 as well as 2.11.2 and consult with an experienced foundation phase educator. Make a list of assessment techniques or methods and find out what specific assessment tools or instruments are used in the foundation phase.

Use the table below:

Note that a few have been included to give you an idea of what to do.

Assessment methods and instruments used in the foundation phase

Assessment method/technique	Assessment tool/instrument
Observation	Checklist
Poster-making in groups	Observation sheet
Individual oral presentation	Assessment rubric
Design & construction task	Worksheet and checklist
Question paper	



Activity 2.16 **Planning assessment for the foundation phase**

Consider the checklist for assessment planning proposed by the Gauteng Department of Education in section 2.23 of the prescribed text. Answer the following questions with regard to assessment planning in general and in the foundation phase in particular.

Use the heading: *Assessment planning in the foundation phase*

1. Do you think the sequence of questions in the checklist is significant? Explain your response with reference to where one should start when planning and the sequence of events in the assessment process.
2. Are the questions focused on assessing a group of learners, e.g. a class of Grade 1 learners, or are they focused on individual assessment? Why would this be the case?
3. Are the so-called “other questions relevant to assessment” really other questions? Compare these questions to the list in the checklist. Which of these can be incorporated with some of the questions in the checklist?
4. Use your responses to the previous three questions and design your own checklist for planning an assessment in any phase of schooling.

Activity 2.17 Ethics, flags and issues

Use the content in sections 2.21, 2.22 and 2.23.2 and create a list of do's and don'ts that you can keep at hand to constantly remind you of the ethics, issues and red flags to keep in mind when planning and conducting an assessment in the foundation phase.

You may want to amend these two lists to be more relevant to the phase you are more familiar with.

Comment

I think that we should take notice of how assessment is done in the foundation phase to enhance our general understanding of assessment, and to learn from our colleagues working with the little ones.

The activity you did on observation as the primary method of assessment may be useful for all educators, irrespective of the phase in which they teach, especially when teaching a subject with practical components where learners are observed doing particular tasks.

I also think that the checklist for planning assessment can be very useful indeed for all assessors. Maybe the checklist can be adapted to be a useful framework for thinking about assessment in a principled, yet practical manner that can be useful for all educators as assessors.

Rethink and reflect

You will have noticed that Chapter 2 of the prescribed text focuses on assessment in the pre-school and foundation phases. In the context of the educator acting as an assessor, the assessment of pre-school children seems to fall outside of the scope of the module.

The focus on both pre-school and foundation phase assessment reminds us that assessment should never be seen in isolation. Assessment of pre-school children is relevant to foundation phase educators in the same way that assessment in the foundation phase is relevant to educators in the intermediate and senior phases, and assessment in the senior phase is relevant to assessment in the FET phase.

Conclusion

Much of what you have done in this study unit may have seemed like a refrain repeating itself. The fundamental aspects of assessment were addressed in Unit 1, and have now been contextualised in the foundation phase in Unit 2. In fact, these refrains will remain with us when we consider assessment in the intermediate and senior phases.

Study Unit 3 Assessment in the intermediate and senior phases

Introduction

In the previous study unit of this study guide, you learned that by studying assessment in a particular phase of schooling you expand your understanding of assessment in the CAPS context. This study unit expands such an understanding even further. The next activity serves to introduce you to assessment in the intermediate and senior phases.



Activity 3.1 **Introduction to the chapter**

Study the table of contents as well as the introduction to chapter 3 of the prescribed text and answer the following questions in your workbook file:

1. *Illustrate the five major components of the chapter by means of a mind map.*
2. *What have the challenges facing South Africa's education system since 1994 with the advent of political democracy been?*
3. *Is CAPS yet another new curriculum to be introduced in South Africa? Explain your response.*
4. *What does the change towards implementing CAPS mean for teachers and managers in the intermediate and senior phases in particular?*
5. *Why is assessment a contentious issue?*



Comment

I think that we should appreciate and welcome the reality of curriculum change. We are living in an ever-changing world, and through a fast-changing era in global development, and if we do not change and adapt with the times, we will miss out on opportunities for growth and for becoming and remaining competitive as a developing nation.

CAPS should be seen as yet another version of an ever-changing curriculum, rather than the solution to all our problems in education, teaching, and assessment.

We have to face the fact that we have not succeeded in delivering the best quality education to the country's youth since political democracy – and that we need to work hard at getting it right with the implementation of CAPS.

The mind map you created in response to the first question in the introductory activity should have included the purpose of assessment as one of the major aspects of assessment in the intermediate and senior phases.

Being clear on why we do any assessment is crucial in planning and conducting the assessment, not only in the intermediate and senior phases but universally in all phases of schooling. The next activity sets out to enrich your understanding of this fundamental issue in the school context.



Activity 3.2 *The purpose of assessment*

Study section 3.2 in the prescribed text which provides an overview of the purposes for doing an assessment in the intermediate and senior phases.

Also, study the overview below entitled "Purposes of Assessment". It is taken from a previous study guide for this module and reflects the view of the Department of Basic Education on the purpose of assessment in the phase you currently teach or plan to teach.

1. *In which ways are the two overviews of the purposes of assessment similar?*
2. *In which ways are the two overviews different?*
3. *Using the arguments in both overviews, compile your own list of purposes of assessment, each with a brief explanation of the relevance of your context.*
4. *Give an example of every purpose of assessment in your context.*
5. *Comment on the possibility of having more than one purpose for a particular assessment you plan to do on the learners in your teaching-learning-assessment context.*

Purposes of Assessment

The Department of Education has indicated on more than one occasion that an assessment could be used to diagnose, guide, grade, select and so forth, but the teacher has to be sure that the purpose would be applicable to the particular field, content, and reason for the assessment.

1. Assessment in order to grade or sort

Grading is the most common purpose of assessment. Teachers read learners' work and assign a grade or mark to indicate the value of the work. This means that the teacher forms a judgment as to whether the work deserves an A, B, or C or whatever. By allocating grades to the work, it is possible to sort the learners according to their performance. It's also possible to decide whether a learner passes or fails that specific subject at a particular grade by adding up the number of marks he has accumulated.

2. Assessment in order to promote or select

The main reason for this way of assessing is to select. The underlying principle in selecting and promotion is to keep the group more or less at a similar level and to facilitate teaching from the front. The education system allows entrance to higher education depending on Matric or Grade 12 results. Learners performing well in a particular field would be selected, for instance, to complete a project in Environmental Studies, languages or Science. To be promoted to a higher level, learners should prove their competence by passing all tests and examinations.

3. Assessment in order to evaluate

Schools and training institutions are judged by the performance of the learners; therefore society often uses the results to evaluate the quality of education. For instance, a school with a high Matric pass rate will be seen as a "good" school and the teaching will be considered

effective and of a high standard. Teachers may also evaluate their own teaching according to the performance of the learners; if learners are doing well, teachers would feel that their teaching is effective.

4. *Assessment in order to predict*

Existing assessment tools are used for the purpose of prediction. In other words, if learners do well in that particular assessment, they will do well in something else as well. Career guidance leans heavily on prediction for future career options, with the indication that if a learner does well in a particular field, careers associated with that field ought to be considered.

5. *Assessment in order to diagnose*

Outcomes-based assessment is designed to promote diagnostic assessment it enables the teacher to adjust teaching to where the learners are, and to plan how to teach and assess further. A variety of tasks designed to find out where learners are struggling will help the teacher change the teaching strategy so as to make teaching and learning more effective.

6. *Assessment in order to guide and motivate*

Teachers want their learners to do well! By giving positive reinforcement, teachers can use assessment to create a stimulating environment that encourages learners to learn while at the same time guiding their progress. This is possible when learners are given credit for what they can do rather than being penalised for what they have not yet mastered. In this way, learners become self-motivated to learn more and better and to master the next step.

7. *Assessment in order to learn*

Assessment for learning underlines the entire approach of the curriculum in South Africa since 1996. Traditionally teaching, learning and assessment have been kept separate, but assessment for learning involves integrating the three. In class this means using tests as a basis for further learning, or doing informal assessment during group work or while the learners are busy with a project.

8. *Assessment in order to control*

Assessment for the sake of control is a highly controversial use of assessment! In such cases, the teacher will use the assessment as a "stick" to control bad behaviour. For example, a learner "underachieved" in the eyes of the teachers in a particular school. The teachers decided to mark her down in an attempt to make her work harder and achieve according to her ability. Unfortunately, this had exactly the opposite effect on the learner — she decided to stop working!

Rather than addressing bad behaviour separately from achievement, assessment, in order to control, is still sometimes used for ill-disciplined learners by marking their work strictly. On the other hand, well-behaved learners are sometimes rewarded with marks for their good behaviour. This is an extremely unfair practice and should never be part of any assessment.



Comment

I think that the authors quoted in the prescribed text describe the general purposes for which assessment is used at a systemic level, whereas the overview provided above is more specific to classroom contexts.

Both overviews are relevant to teachers and managers in education and should be borne in mind every time you plan an assessment.

The purpose of an assessment is probably the most important issue to think about when you start planning any assessment.

I also think that it is possible to have more than one purpose in mind when planning an assessment. There is a danger, however, that you may want to use an assessment for another purpose it was not originally planned for, and this may lead to misinterpretation of assessment results or even worse, an entirely invalid assessment, especially if other purposes are considered after the assessment has been done. An example of this is when a teacher plans to do a peer assessment for the purpose of assessment for learning, yet the results end up being used afterward for promotion or progression (grading) purposes. Such a use of the results is invalid as the peers are not qualified to make judgments for certification or promotion or progression purposes.

The educator acting as an assessor will start planning every assessment with a very clear understanding of the purpose or purposes of the assessment as the most important consideration regarding the intended assessment because the purpose will determine almost every other aspect of the intended assessment.

Now that you have considered the purposes of assessment, you can turn your attention to other assessment issues in the intermediate and senior phases.

3.3 CAPS for the intermediate and senior phases

Introduction

The following series of activities (Activities 3.3.1–3.3.7) have been designed to provide clarity on assessment issues in the CAPS context. Working through these activities will help you understand exactly how assessment is done in the intermediate and senior phases as required in the CAPS. In order to really benefit from these activities, you have to access a CAPS document for any subject in the intermediate and/or senior phase as a reference to be used in these activities. You may also find the National Protocol for Assessment very useful. If you have not already obtained this policy document, do so now. These documents are freely available on the Department of Basic Education website, www.education.gov.za



Activity 3.3.1

CAPS for the intermediate and senior phases

Study section 3.3.1 in the prescribed text while referring to the CAPS for the subject you have accessed. Refer to all your responses to the subject you have selected.

Answer the questions/respond to the following tasks:

1. Mention four concerns regarding the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) that led to revising the curriculum and that resulted in the CAPS.
2. Did the subject name change? What is the subject name in CAPS?
3. What assessment scale was used before CAPS was introduced?
4. What is meant by “clearly delineated topics” for your subject?
5. List the number of assessments per type of assessment as prescribed for your subject in CAPS.
6. Why were outcomes and assessment standards replaced with themes and topics/sub-topics?
7. Name the three main levels of planning in the CAPS with reference to the subject you chose.
8. What is the relation between the annual teaching plan and assessment in the grade and subject you selected?
9. Why do you think a teacher should submit a programme of assessment to the school management team (SMT) at the beginning of the academic year?
10. Give an example of how you would “find ways for learners to succeed” as proposed by Killen in the prescribed text.
11. What challenges would teachers in the intermediate and senior phases face in accomplishing assessment?
12. What are the guidelines for progression in the intermediate and senior phases?
13. Give examples of evidence of intervention and support given to learners who are promoted to the next grade in spite of not performing at the required level in a particular grade.



Activity 3.3.2

Continuous assessment

Compare the definitions and descriptions of continuous assessment and related concepts to what you have already done in study units 1 and 2 of this study guide. Expand or revise your definitions and descriptions where you have learnt more in this regard.



Activity 3.3.3

School-based Assessment (SBA)

Study section 3.3.3 of the prescribed text as well as the CAPS for the subject you chose and accessed previously.

Respond to the following in your workbook file under the heading “SBA in Inter-Sen Phase”:

1. What is meant by SBA in the intermediate and senior phases?

2. *Why is SBA done?*
3. *What is the most prominent characteristic of SBA?*
4. *Illustrate the relative weights of SBA and end-of-the year examinations in all phases in table format.*
5. *Explain what is meant by formal and informal assessment in the SBA context by means of examples from your subject.*
6. *Illustrate the minimum requirements for your subject in table format as in the example of Mathematics in Table 3.2 in the prescribed text.*
7. *Why do you think feedback should be provided to learners after assessment?*
8. *What formats of feedback should be used? In which cases would different formats be used?*
9. *Why should the school assessment plan be provided to learners and parents in the first week of the term?*



Activity 3.3.4 *Recording and reporting*

Study section 3.3.4 of the prescribed text, then consult the CAPS of the subject you chose earlier and respond to the following:

1. *What are the purposes of reporting according to the Department of Basic Education?*
2. *Define the following terminology related to assessment in the intermediate and senior phases:*
 - 2.1 *recording*
 - 2.2 *reporting*
 - 2.3 *progression*
 - 2.4 *evidence*
 - 2.5 *assessment instrument*
 - 2.6 *rating scale*
 - 2.7 *checklist*
 - 2.8 *rubric*
3. *Give the seven-point rating scale to be used in all grades in table format.*
4. *Referring to a specific assessment task, give a qualitative description of each of the “achievement descriptions” in the subject you chose earlier. Your response must show how “outstanding achievement” differs from “meritorious achievement” and similar descriptions in terms of the quality of the learner’s performance.*
5. *List seven principles underpinning recording and reporting in the intermediate and senior phases, as required by the Department of Basic Education.*
6. *Complete the following table to reflect your understanding of various methods of recording learners’ performances in the subject choice.*

<i>Method</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<i>Anecdotal records</i>		
<i>Partial credit scoring</i>		
<i>Dichotomous records</i>		
<i>Judgment of content and skills required</i>		

7. How will you ensure that your judgments of learners' performances are balanced? Refer to three critical questions in this regard and illustrate your response by means of an example from assessing learners in the subject of your choice.



Activity 3.3.5

Assessment records in CAPS context

Study section 3.3.5 in the prescribed text and then distinguish among the following:

1. record sheets
2. schedules
3. report cards
4. teacher files
5. learner profiles

Describe every record briefly and indicate whose responsibility it is to compile, maintain and ensure the safekeeping of every record.



Activity 3.3.6

Systemic Evaluation – Annual National Assessment

Study section 3.3.6 in the prescribed text and respond to the following:

1. What is the purpose of systemic evaluation by means of ANA?
2. What effects would ANA have on schools
3. What is the role of the Department of Basic Education in this regard



Activity 3.3.7

General Education and Training Certificate (GETC)

Study section 3.3.7 and respond to the following:

1. What is compulsory education?
2. What is the NQF?
3. List the exit levels or bands on the NQF in chronological sequence and indicate the number of years of schooling for each.
4. What is the purpose of the GET band of the NQF?
5. What are the requirements for progressing from the GET to the next level on the NQF?
6. What are CTA's? Refer to what these are and who sets them and name the qualification awarded to successful learners.



Comment

I think that the series of activities you have just completed would stand you in good stead as an educator and assessor, not only in the intermediate and senior phases but in whatever phase you are teaching or may teach in future.

Bear in mind that these activities have been designed to assist you in understanding assessment in a CAPS context. Most of the requirements covered in these activities are also applicable to assessment in the FET phase.

3.4 Assessment in the intermediate and senior phases

You are reminded that the only learning outcome for this module is that you should be able to **plan an assessment of learners** in school contexts.

The following series of activities are specifically focused on assessment planning in the intermediate and senior phases. Most of what you will learn in doing these activities will be useful, even when you are teaching and assessing in any of the other phases of schooling.

Activity 3.4.1



Planning for assessment

Read section 3.4.1 once in its entirety to develop a sense of what is discussed under the heading. You will notice that actual assessment planning itself is not discussed. Try to formulate an idea of what is actually being discussed in the section.

Comment



I think that the discussion in par 3.4.1 revolves around policy frameworks, key questions, steps in the assessment process and assessment principles to bear in mind when planning for assessment. Very few direct guidelines for actual assessment planning are discussed. Maybe it would be a good idea to study each of these aspects in more depth to understand how assessment planning should be done.

Do Activities 3.4.1.1–3.4.1.6 to consolidate and summarise the aspects to bear in mind when planning assessment.

Activity 3.4.1.1



Policies to consider in planning for assessment

List the four policies to consider when planning an assessment and explain why each policy should be considered.

Activity 3.4.1.2



Key questions to consider when planning assessment

List the three key questions to ask when starting to plan for assessment, as suggested by the author of Chapter 3 of the prescribed text. Do you agree that these questions are the critical ones when planning for assessment? What about the purpose of the assessment? Should we not first ask why we want to assess the learners?

Activity 3.4.1.3



Policy requirements to bear in mind when planning for assessment

List the requirements laid down in CAPS regarding assessments which should be borne in mind when planning for assessment.

Activity 3.4.1.4



Integrating assessment with teaching and learning using the steps in the assessment process when planning for assessment

Indicate how assessment should be integrated with teaching and learning and illustrate the steps in the assessment process by means of a diagram.

Make use of a cyclical illustration rather than a linear one. Bear in mind that the first step should emanate from teaching and learning and the last step should feed into teaching and learning.

Revisit activity 1.7.1.2 and expand the diagram to indicate how assessment emanates from and feeds into the teaching-learning situation.

Also bear in mind that, in assessment planning, all the steps in the assessment process should be planned for – none of these steps “just happen”!

Activity 3.4.1.5



Assessment principles to consider in planning for assessment

Compare the discussion on assessment principles in section 3.4.1, as well as the diagram in Figure 3.3 in the prescribed text, to what you did in study unit 1 of this study guide (in activity 1.7.1.2 and note specifically what was argued in the reflection on assessment principles.

Rework the diagram in Figure 3.3 to indicate what must be valid, what must be fair, what must be current, what must be reliable and what must be sufficient about an assessment you plan.

The reworked diagram should indicate that the assessment process must be reliable, the assessment method must be fair, and the assessment evidence must be valid and sufficient.

Activity 3.4.1.6



Assessment decisions to consider in planning for assessment

Indicate what decisions should ultimately be made when doing an assessment – refer to the number of assessment tasks per grade as well as to the types and nature of assessment activities.



Rethink and reflect

You will have noticed from your responses to Activities 3.4.1.1 to 3.4.1.6 that the heading of the section (section 3.4) seems somewhat inappropriate.

*When I first read it, I expected direct guidelines on how to plan for assessment in the intermediate and senior phases. I read the heading as referring to a set of aspects to consider **WHEN** planning for assessment rather than to direct guidelines on **HOW** to do planning for assessment.*

Maybe a heading reading “Aspects to consider when planning assessment” would have been more appropriate.

I also thought that there could have been cross-referencing regarding the principles of assessment as these were discussed in both Chapter 1 and 3 of the prescribed text.

It is of utmost importance, however, to bear these aspects in mind when you come to the point where you have to do actual assessment planning in reality.

Perhaps we can create a practical checklist here. The one appearing below is a draft that you may want to refine later.

Checklist for consideration BEFORE actual assessment planning is done

1. What policies do I have to consider?
2. What component of SBA or Practical Assessment is being planned?
3. What will this assessment mark contribute towards the final consolidated mark?
4. How will the assessment be evaluated, checked and authenticated?
5. What is the purpose of the assessment?
6. What exactly do I want the learners to be able to do?
7. How can I get them to show that they can do it?
8. How will the assessor (I, or their peers, or the learners themselves) assess their performances?
9. How can I ensure that the assessment will be transparent and clearly focused?
10. How can I ensure that it will be based on skills?
11. How will I vary the methods and contexts?
12. How will I assure that principled assessment is done and that all assessment principles are applied?
13. How will the learners generate the evidence that I have to gather?
14. How will the evidence be evaluated?
15. How will the results be recorded and reported?
16. How will I and the learners use the information about the assessment in further teaching and learning?

Can you see the benefits of being critical of what you read in a textbook when you study and using whatever is relevant to what you are studying?

Given the aspects we have to consider when planning for assessment, the place of assessment planning in lesson planning needs attention. The activities that follow are intended to guide you to understanding:

- that assessment planning is integrated with lesson planning
- Bloom's taxonomy and its relevance to assessment design and assessment development
- criteria for designing questions in assessments, as required by the Department of Basic Education

Activity 3.4.2



Lesson planning and assessment

Read par 3.4.2 in its entirety and with care and concentration. You will note that the three aspects referred to above are all discussed in this section of the prescribed text. Do the three activities that follow to make sense of these three aspects.

Activity 3.4.2.1



Lesson planning and assessment planning

Analyse the template for lesson planning in Figure 3.4 – or any other lesson planning template used in a school where CAPS has been implemented – and answer the following questions:

1. What is the duration of the period for which lesson planning is done?
2. How many periods on the timetable will be used to teach the theme/topics and skills planned?
3. How many teaching and learning activities be planned for in one such period?
4. What types of assessments are planned for, for every activity or period?
5. Does this mean that every period of learning activity should include an assessment activity, either formal or informal?
6. Is the purpose of assessment indicated anywhere in the template?
7. Do you think that more than one purpose may be chosen or planned for in a template such as this?
8. Is there an indication of the assessment method, assessment resources and assessment instruments or tools that will be required to assess the effectiveness of the teaching/learning activities planned for the lesson or series of lessons?
9. Why do you think moderation and support are included under the inputs by the head of the department?
10. Would a lesson plan with no reference to the kind of assessment, assessment activities and assessment resources and instruments lead to effective teaching and learning? Why? Why not?

Comment



I think that your responses should clearly reflect the fundamental approach to education, teaching and assessment in the CAPS context, namely that assessment is an integral part of every lesson.

This does not mean, however, that assessment will be done effectively if we plan only for teaching and learning in our lessons. Assessments, whether formal or informal, internal or external, school-based or practical, need to be planned for with the same amount of care and diligence as the teaching methodologies

and learning activities are planned for in lesson planning. In fact, assessment should be planned in such a way that it forms an integral part of the teaching methodologies and learning activities in every lesson!

Activity 3.4.2.2



Using Bloom's taxonomy in assessment design and development

Carefully study the part of section 3.4.2 starting on p 80 and ending midway through p 81 of the prescribed text. Note that this section is not provided with a sub-heading to indicate that assessment design and development using Bloom's taxonomy will be discussed. It seems that using Bloom's taxonomy is regarded as part of lesson planning with reference to the development of assessments. Continue with this activity once you have studied the comments below.

Comment



I think that we need to clarify a few issues here before we continue. These are:

- Clarify concepts such as assessment design, assessment development, taxonomy, cognitive abilities.
- Additional comments on Bloom's Taxonomy.
- Who designs and develops assessments in school contexts?

Assessment design

To design an assessment is to decide what assessment method will be used for a particular assessment activity focused on particular teaching and learning activities that have taken place or are still to take place in the immediate future.

Example: Let's say you are teaching Natural Science to Grade 5 learners. You would want to assess the learners during the teaching-learning process and also afterward. You may then decide to use a peer assessment using worksheets as a formative assessment during teaching the particular topic and a written test using a question paper and memorandum for the summative assessment after the topic has been taught.

You have designed two assessments – a peer-assessed worksheet activity and a formal written test assessed by the teacher.

Assessment development

To develop an assessment is to formulate the questions and tasks for an assessment design. In the example above, this would involve writing up the worksheet as an assessment tool or instrument and developing all the questions and tasks to be done by the learners on the worksheet, as well as creating the memorandum and/or checklists, assessment grids and/or assessment rubrics by means of which the worksheets will be assessed by peers.

In addition, the development of the assessment would also include the writing-up of the entire question paper for the test, including the front page and questions or tasks aimed at assessing the learners' abilities, as well as the memorandum for marking/assessing the answers.

Taxonomy

A taxonomy is a classification, arrangement, categorisation or organisation according to which something consisting of or displaying different associated or interrelated levels or groupings is understood and described.

Cognitive ability

Cognitive ability refers to the (mental) abilities used to think or reason.

Additional comments on Bloom's taxonomy

Given the definitions above, Bloom's taxonomy describes different ways of thinking or reasoning used by all of us, children and adults, in our everyday lives.

The taxonomy, like all taxonomies, is illustrated as a pyramid suggesting that the lower domains or levels are more basic and that the higher levels are more advanced or complex.

It also suggests that every layer or level provides the "thinking material" for the level directly above. For example, I must first know and remember the features of a dog, cat, elephant or similar to understand that all of these are animals. I must also know and remember similarities and other features of all animals to understand that these animals are all mammals and that there are other animals that are not.

In the same way, understanding forms the basis for applying and applying forms the basis for analysis, and so on.

It is very important to bear in mind that children/learners at any grade at school have the ability to function at all six levels or domains of the taxonomy. We should not think that younger children are restricted to remembering and understanding and that they will be able to apply and analyse only later in their development. The level of thinking is simply more concrete and relatively straightforward in logic at a younger age and more abstract and relatively more complex at a higher age – this because there is more "thinking material" and experience in the mind of the older learner.

The taxonomy is used to design and develop curricula (what is taught at school and what learners are expected to do when learning) and by implication also to design and develop assessments.

Consider our example of teaching and assessing Grade 5 learners on a given topic in Natural Science, used earlier – and refer to Table 3.6 in the prescribed text.

Should your worksheet and test use only questions and tasks requiring of your learners to list, describe, define, name and explain, summarise and compare, you have developed an assessment that assesses only the bottom two levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

The idea is that all six levels of the taxonomy should be challenged in an assessment. Lower, middle and higher-order thinking should be assessed, otherwise, the assessment is unbalanced or weak.

In the lower grades at school, relatively more questions or tasks of an assessment (worksheet or test) are set at the lower domains of the taxonomy and only a few at the higher domains. This ratio changes gradually as we set fewer tasks at the lower domains and more at the higher domains as we progress to higher grades.

At post-graduate level, at which you are currently operating as a student, almost no tasks are set requiring of you to name, list and describe, whereas most tasks are set at the higher-order domains requiring that you apply, analyse, critique, design, and so on.

Applying Bloom's taxonomy in the design and development of assessments is not only a science. It is also an art that requires a lot of practice, consultation and reflection. The challenge is that the learners are the ones that must pay the price if we design and develop assessments inappropriately or with a scant thought towards applying a useful framework such as Bloom's taxonomy! No wonder then that every assessment designed and developed has to be quality assured by means of moderation by an experienced expert before it can be used to assess learners in reality.

Who designs and develops assessment instruments?

External assessments as used in the school context (Grades 9 and 12) examinations and other relevant assessments are designed by experienced subject matter and assessment experts appointed by the Department of Basic Education for this purpose

Internal Assessments (SBA) in the intermediate and senior phases are designed and developed by teachers internally and moderated internally as well.

Some assessments taken from CAPS textbooks have been designed and developed by the authors of those textbooks.

The most important aspect to bear in mind here is that you, the educator and assessor of the learners allocated to you, are responsible for the quality of the assessment instruments you apply in assessing the learners. No matter where you found an assessment, be it from the Department of Basic Education district office a newly published CAPS textbook, or recommended by your HOD or fellow teacher, never assume that the assessment was designed and developed to fit the purpose and context for which you are assessing. Scrutinise the instrument, critique it in terms of Bloom's taxonomy and/or departmental guidelines and criteria, and make sure it meets requirements before you implement it. Very often, by adjusting or changing only a few aspects, questions, tasks or the mark allocation, you can improve an assessment instrument to serve your purposes and be an exemplary assessment for others as well.

Activity 3.4.2.3



Applying design criteria set by the Department of Basic Education

Indicate by means of examples from the subject you selected earlier how the criteria for setting assessment questions and tasks are followed. Also, give a few examples of how these are not followed and comment on the consequences.

Activity 3.4.2.4



Concluding activity on assessment design and development

- Source any assessment task for any subject in the intermediate or senior phase from a CAPS textbook or any other source.
- Underline the verbs in the questions and tasks set in the assessment.
- Compare the verbs to those in Table 3.6 in the prescribed text.
- Count the number of items per domain in Bloom's taxonomy.
- Reflect on the arguments made in the prescribed text and in this study guide regarding Bloom's taxonomy and relate these to the instrument scrutinised.
- Reflect on the criteria set by the Department of Basic Education for item design and development and relate these to the items in the instrument being scrutinised.
- Comment on the adherence to Bloom's taxonomy and the quality of items in terms of departmental requirements.
- Suggest ways in which the instrument can be improved.

The series of activities you have just completed highlighted the complex nature of assessment design and development. We turn our attention now to a far less complex step in the assessment process in the school context, namely assessment feedback.

3.4.3 Assessment feedback

The following activity is designed to expand your thinking regarding providing feedback to all stakeholders in assessment, and to learners in particular.

Activity 3.4.3



Assessment feedback

Study section 3.4.3 in the prescribed text and revisit activity 1.10 to refresh your memory on what you have already done in this regard. Now answer the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of assessment feedback?
2. How does assessment feedback influence the culture of teaching and learning?
3. What is the purpose of obtaining feedback from learners regarding an assessment?
4. What is the relationship between assessment feedback and reflection about learning by learners?
5. What is meant by the "hamburger rule" in giving feedback to learners on an assessment?

6. *What are the four important questions teachers need to answer to improve the feedback they give to learners?*



Comment

I think we should add a few more practical guidelines. Consider Table 1.3 on pp 19 and 20 of the textbook reflecting counterproductive ways of giving feedback as opposed to constructive feedback. Use what you have learnt in section 3.4.3 as well as the list of constructive feedback features – then draft a list of guidelines for providing constructive feedback to your learners.

3.4.4 Integrated learning and assessment

One of the features of education in South Africa since political democracy in 1994 is the recognition of learning as an integrated rather than fragmented endeavour. Activity 3.4.4 requires you to apply such an understanding of education and assessment to your own context.



Activity 3.4.4

Integrated learning and assessment

Study section 3.4.3 in the prescribed text and suggest ways in which assessments may also be integrated across subjects. Think of projects that may involve more than one subject. What would the consequences be for recording and reporting on such integrated assessments?



Comment

I think that learners may experience such integrated assessment activities as more realistic and sensible as they will be focused on using more than one perspective or subject to address one particular problem or challenge in life.

Recording and reporting within an existing CAPS framework that is clearly subject bound may require a bit of creative thinking. This is with regards to marking allocation and distribution of marks allocated per subject for work done in such an assessment project and in order to award credits for achievements within the existing framework.

Obviously, it would require co-operation among teachers – as well as the possibility of more than one teacher teaching the subjects integrated into the assessment.

Although the idea of integrated assessments may seem complicated and challenging, the results seem much more rewarding and beneficial to the learners, and therefore worth trying!

3.5 Planning assessment to cater for all learners



Activity 3.5

Planning assessment to cater for all learners

Study section 3.5.1–3.5.3 in the prescribed text and create a mind map to illustrate how the three constructs, diversity, learning styles and multiple bits of intelligence, may be applied in assessment planning to cater for all kinds of learners.

Use the following as the central idea: Assessment for all learners

Use the three constructs as primary sub-sections of your mind map.

Extend the map to include the following for each sub-section:

- relevant learning activities
- assessment activities and methods
- assessment instruments and tools



Comment

I think that catering for all kinds of learners starts with acknowledging that every learner is a unique being with an individual set of talents, abilities, learning styles and a unique “mix” of multiple bits of intelligence. It also requires that you have to know every learner in your class and commit to treating every learner in a way that would suit his or her unique make-up as a learner. You also have to develop acute management skills to match individuality with class teaching, especially in contexts where the teacher–learner ratio is neither really favourable nor conducive to differentiated teaching and assessment. To cater for differences among learners in assessment seems even more challenging as the principle of fairness demands that all learners be treated the same in assessment. This is true even though such differences may demand that different kinds of assessment are used for learners of different make-ups even when they are in one class and doing an assessment relevant to one particular skill or theme or topic in the curriculum. The answer seems to lie with a variety of assessment approaches and methods and opportunities, rather than in one-off “one-size-fits-all” approaches. Once again, it is clear from reflecting on these issues that catering for all learners as unique beings will demand careful planning of assessment if it is to be done effectively in school contexts.

3.6 Assessment challenges and possible solutions

The following activity serves to summarise the assessment challenges and some solutions in the intermediate and senior phases.



Activity 3.6

Assessment challenges and possible solutions

Study section 3.6 in the prescribed text in its entirety and summarise the challenges and solutions by creating a table as indicated below. Note that one example has been done to give you an idea of what to do.

Assessment challenges and solutions

Challenge	Brief description	Possible solutions
1. <i>Paradigm shift</i>	<i>Shift towards a learner-centred, communicative and text-based approach to teaching, learning, and assessment. Feelings of being overwhelmed by changes from outcomes to content and numerous new and different terminologies and ways of doing teaching and assessment.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Accept change as a part of life.</i> - <i>Familiarise yourself with new policies.</i> - <i>Demand proper training and attend such with a positive attitude.</i> - <i>Become involved – join the School Assessment Team.</i>
2. <i>Languages issues</i>		

Conclusion

In doing all the activities in this study unit, you may have realised that we seem to repeat the refrain of study units 1 and 2 again, only in a different context. The same will apply when we study assessment in the FET.

Study Unit 4

Assessment in FET

Introduction

In the previous study unit of this study guide you learned that, by studying assessment in the intermediate and senior phases of schooling, you can expand your understanding of assessment in the CAPS context. This study unit expands your understanding of your role as educator and assessor even further. The activities in this study unit mostly require that you apply your current understanding of assessment to assessment in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase in schools and FET for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Bear in mind that you will study this chapter with constant reference to assessment within a CAPS context. It is of utmost importance then, that you study this study unit of the study guide and Chapter 4 in the prescribed text by using not only the prescribed text but also with the following two documents at hand at all times:

- the National Protocol for Assessment (NPA)
- the CAPS for any subject or subjects that you are familiar with or that you will be teaching (This subject will be referred to as “your FET subject” in the context of this study guide.)

Bear in mind that these documents are available for download on the Department of Basic Education website, www.education.gov.za

The first five activities in this study unit are designed to introduce you to assessment in the FET phase and to reflect on aspects of assessment that have already been addressed in other study units of this study guide, but now being presented in the FET context. These aspects are:

- the purpose of assessment in the FET context
- documents guiding assessment in FET for schools
- MARRA (an acronym for monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting, and accountability, again in the FET context)
- monitoring progress through informal and formal assessment

Activity 4.6 focuses on assessment methods and activity 4.7 on recording and reporting in FET at schools.

Activity 4.8 reflects on the unique nature of assessment in FET at schools and TVET in institutions for further learning beyond compulsory learning.

Activity 4.1



Introduction

Study the table of contents as well as the introduction to Chapter 4 of the prescribed text and answer the following questions in your workbook file:

1. Illustrate the five major components of the chapter by means of a mind map.
2. The authors of the prescribed text argue that learners in the FET phase tend to focus their learning efforts on what they think will be assessed or tested on. What is the effect of this tendency on assessment in relation to teaching and learning?
3. What is the value of assessment *for* learning over assessment *of* learning?
4. What is the difference between FET and TVET in terms of assessment?



Activity 4.2 **Purposes of assessment in the FET phase**

Study section 4.2 (including table 4.1) in the prescribed text. Also, access the CAPS for any subject of your choice and then respond to the following in your workbook file:

1. What are the major purposes of assessment in the FET phase?
2. Reflect on the general aim of assessment in the FET phase and comment on the relationship between formative and summative assessment in the FET phase.
3. Indicate how the purpose of assessment varies in the different grades in the FET phase.
4. Study the summary of formal assessments for Geography for Grade 12 as reflected in Table 4.1. Study the requirements in the CAPS of the subject you selected and sourced and create a similar table to summarise the formal assessments for the subject.



Activity 4.3 **Documents guiding assessment in the FET phase**

Study section 4.3 of the prescribed text and list the documents to be consulted and applied when planning and conducting assessments in the FET phase.

Also, give a very brief account of the purpose and content of every document listed.



Activity 4.4 **MARRA in the FET phase**

1. Study section 4.4 of the prescribed text and give a very brief account of the acronym MARRA (Barnes & Hunt, in Dreyer 2013:103) in the context of assessment in the FET phase at the school level.
2. Peruse the CAPS for your FET subject as well as the National Protocol for Assessment and study all references in these two documents to the five terms that the acronym refers to.
3. Make brief comments on the relevance of these four concepts in the CAPS context in a summary using the following heading: MARRA in the CAPS context.



Activity 4.5 **Monitoring progress through informal and formal assessment**

Study section 4.5 in the prescribed text, consult the NPA and the CAPS for your subject, and then respond to the following in your workbook file:

Using informal assessments in FET contexts

1. What is the role of informal assessment in monitoring learner progress in FET contexts? Refer to unstructured and more structured ways of assessing progress.
2. Illustrate your response by means of an example of unstructured assessment and an example of more structured informal assessment in your FET subject.
3. How can peer, group, and self-assessments be used?

4. *Reflect on the need for recording the results of informal assessments in the FET context.*
5. *What is the value of informal assessments, especially when done while learners are busy with a teaching and learning activity? To illustrate this, refer to an example in the teaching of your FET subject.*
6. *Reflect on the need to give feedback when doing informal assessments.*
7. *Comment on the need to plan for informal assessments with reference to the examples used in response to any of the tasks already done in this activity.*

Using formal assessments in FET contexts

1. *What is the purpose of formal assessment? Refer to departmental policy in your response.*
2. *Distinguish between formal assessments in Grades 10 and 11 on one hand and Grade 12 on the other. Refer to the weighting of formal assessments during the year and year-end examinations as well as to internal or external assessment and moderation of assessments in your response. Present your response in table format using the following template:*

Formal assessments in FET in schools

	Grades 10 & 11	Grade 12
<i>Internally/externally assessed?</i>		
<i>The weight of SBA during the year?</i>		
<i>The weight of end-of-year examination?</i>		
<i>Moderation internally/externally?</i>		
<i>Exception in terms of end-of-year examinations</i>		

3. *Comment on compliance with standards required by tertiary institutions and in the world of work.*
4. *How should formal assessments be reflected in planning lessons?*
5. *What is a programme of assessment? Illustrate your response by creating a programme of assessment for your FET subject.*

Comment 

I think that we need to pause and reflect on three closely-related concepts, namely assessment activities, assessment methods and assessment instruments.

We argued earlier in this study guide that we should always be very clear on what we mean when we use assessment terminologies.

Consider the following ancient Chinese proverb:

“The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names”

Source: <https://webapps.wku.edu/ctl/quotes/byassess.php>

This quote applies to any fields of study – and to wisdom, of course – but here we are contemplating assessment in particular.

You may have noticed that assessment-related terminologies are often used interchangeably in the literature. Authors may want to refer to an assessment activity and simply use the term “assessment”. Others may have the assessment method in mind and use the term instrument, simply because the one cannot exist without the other.

In my opinion, such a loose use of terminology often leads to misconceptions about assessment in general, when we think and talk about it – but also, and much more seriously, when we conduct assessments that result in ineffective and non-credible assessment practices.

Let us consider the three terms one by one.

Assessment activities

An assessment activity is the task done by learners to produce evidence of their competence, knowledge, understanding, abilities, values, and attitudes and so on. It is a distinct part of what we usually refer to as “an assessment”, yet the “assessment” entails more than just the assessment activity – it includes the evaluation or judgment of the evidence produced by learners. This evaluation, assessment or judgment of evidence can be done by the teacher (teacher assessed), or by the learner or learners (self or peer-assessed), or even by groups of other learners (group assessed).

Assessment activities are always done by learners for the purposes of assessment. Some activities are individual activities, some are done in pairs, and others may be done by groups of learners – and such groups may vary in size or number of members.

Assessment activities also vary in terms of the kind of activity – some are written tasks, others oral, some are individual performances (e.g. prepared speech), some are done in pairs or small groups (e.g. role-plays and dramatisations), and others may be practical or technical demonstrations, which may be done in real or simulated situations.

Some assessments may use one activity only (e.g. written test), whereas others may involve more than one activity (e.g. the drafting of a design and the making of the article in Art or Technology). Most activities require that learners undertake various tasks. Refer back to Table 3.6 listing long lists of verbs related to Bloom’s taxonomy.

Assessment is unthinkable without an assessment activity as it is designed with the sole purpose of producing assessment evidence. Such evidence can be assessed, evaluated or judged by the assessor, either after the assessment activity has been completed (e.g. marking a test) or during the assessment activity (e.g. evaluating an oral presentation).

Always bear in mind that an assessment activity is always part of an assessment method and will be done using some kind of assessment instrument.

Also, bear the following in mind:

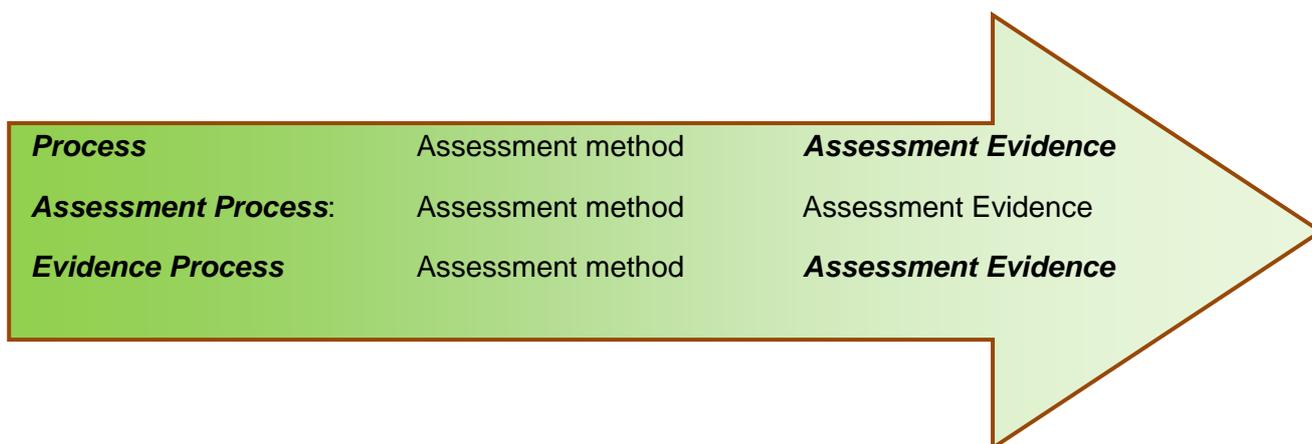
When you say: “I have to do an assessment with my Grade 10’s this week...” in everyday conversation in the staff room, this statement means that:

- The Grade 10 learners will do an assessment activity, they will complete worksheets on a particular topic, for example, and in doing so will produce assessment evidence.
- You, the teacher, or the learners themselves, will be doing the assessment, meaning that either you or the learners will assess the evidence in the worksheets.
- The assessment will be done in a specific way using a particular method, namely, an individual written task, and this method will use a particular instrument, namely, a worksheet and memorandum or checklist.

Assessment methods

Assessment methods are ways of collecting or gathering assessment evidence for the purpose of evaluating learner abilities, on the one hand. At the same time, assessment methods are ways of evaluating, judging and assessing assessment evidence, on the other hand.

In Unit 1 you studied the following diagram to understand the relationship between assessment as a process and the production of evidence by learners, without which assessment cannot be done:



All assessment methods are dual in nature – when using any assessment method we use a particular way of collecting assessment evidence AND we use a particular way of judging the evidence collected.

We (assessors) collect the evidence by giving learners instructions to DO something that will produce the evidence. Note that the learners produce the evidence and the assessor (teacher) collects the evidence.

It is very important that you understand that it is ideal that the evidence is recorded in some way. In some cases, the evidence is easily recorded, and in other cases, it is so difficult that we do not record it at all. Study the table below and note that, in all cases, the assessor’s judgments on the evidence are recorded, but the actual evidence produced by the individual being assessed is not always recorded:

Assessment method	Way of recording evidence	Comment on records
Written tasks (tests, research tasks, essays, assignments, etc)	Learners write down the evidence on paper using blue ink.	Easily collected and can be kept for various purposes such as moderation, record keeping, appeals, investigations and so on. Usually, the assessor's judgments are recorded on or in the same instrument in which the evidence is recorded. This is usually done by the assessor in red ink by means of tick or marks awarded, as well as a total score and an indication of whether the required minimum standard was achieved or not.
Oral tests/assessments (oral tests, prepared speech, reciting a poem	The teacher has to tape or video record every learner's performance/responses to questions. The evidence exists only when the learner is speaking/performing the language task.	This is very cumbersome but is done in certain contexts. Sometimes the assessor may record some comments or notes of what was said/performed by the learner, but usually, only the assessor's judgments of the evidence are recorded in written format by filling in the assessment instrument (checklist, grid or rubric). Again, the total score and whether the minimum standard was achieved are indicated as well.
Practical performances e.g. cook a meal in Hospitality Studies	The teacher has to tape or video record every learner's performance/responses to instructions and judges the performance by assessing the cooked meal as the assessment product.	Although the cooked meal is evidence of the learner's ability, the actual process of preparing the meal in the kitchen is more important as the following of the steps in a recipe is actually what is assessed. The correctness of the process of preparing the meal is inferred from the meal presented by the learner as evidence. Assessment of practical tasks involves observing the learners during the preparation process and making judgments on the evidence produced. Usually, the observed performance is not recorded and only the product is assessed as evidence. The meal itself (as evidence of the performance) cannot be stored or kept indefinitely for moderation and other purposes as is the case with written assessments.
Observation of practical tasks in reality (e.g. a driver's test for a driver's license)	The assessor has to video record every learner's performance in the practical task as well as the circumstances under which the performance is given, e.g. other traffic, road conditions, etc.	The evidence is usually not recorded because of technical difficulties. The integrity of the assessor is paramount as there is no moderator who accompanies the assessor and learner on the practical assessment task. These kinds of assessments are very rare in school (FET) contexts.

Simulations (role-plays)	The teacher has to tape or video record every learner's performance in the role-play, (for example)	The quality of the evidence is dependent on the quality of the simulation. The learner cannot produce the required evidence if the simulation is not realistic. If the other party in a role-play does not play the part appropriately, the learner cannot perform in the way which is expected and in terms of which he or she will be assessed. The learner may have the ability to do the required task but may be prevented from giving evidence of this because of the other party not performing the way he or she should. The evidence is usually not recorded because of technical difficulties.
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An assessment method is determined by the purpose of the assessment, first and foremost, but the choice of method to be used may also be influenced by other aspects.

For example, when the purpose is a summative assessment of all learners in a particular grade at the end of the term, the most appropriate method would be a written test assessed by the educators teaching the subject to all classes in the grade. Likewise, if the purpose is to assess progress during the term and to identify possible barriers to achievement among the learners you teach, then a class test assessed by you only, may be more suitable. If one learner is ill on the day of the class test, you may change the method to an oral test for that learner, simply because it is less time-consuming and easily manageable to do an oral test, rather than have the learner write the test and assess the script afterward.

- *the purpose of the assessment (e.g. assessment for learning – formative assessment or assessment of learning – summative assessment)*
- *the kind of assessment activities (e.g. written, oral or performed evidence being produced)*
- *who the assessor is (teacher, self, peer, or group assessments)*

Another interesting point to bear in mind is that assessment methods are sometimes named inconsistently. Some methods are named in terms of what the learners do (written test, oral test, research task) and others in terms of what the assessor does (observation or practical assessment) and others even in terms of the context of the assessment (simulation, role-play, or practical). I think that this often adds to the confusion about assessment methods.

Maybe we should consider using a uniform way of naming the assessment methods we use.

Traditionally, especially in content-based approaches, all assessments were done by the teacher only. Since the introduction of outcomes-based and learner-centred approaches, learners also assess their own work, either in group or peer-assessments or in self-appraisals. This shift towards involving learners as assessors in what is understood as formative assessments created a need to indicate who the assessor is when we name or describe assessment methods. Consider the following:

Common names of assessment methods	Suggested alternative names & variations
Test	Written test (teacher assessed) Written test (Peer assessed)
Oral Test	Oral test (teacher assessed) Oral test (peer assessed)
Exam/Examination	Written midterm examination (internally assessed) Written final examination (externally assessed)
Assignment (research task, worksheet, essay, article, report, creative writing, letter, composition, summary, etc.)	Individual written task (teacher assessed) Individual written task (peer assessed) Individual written task (self-assessed) Pair or group written task (teacher assessed) Pair of group written task (peer assessed)
Practical	Practical ask (teacher assessed) Practical task (peer assessed) Practical demonstration (teacher assessed)
Oral	Oral presentation (teacher assessed) Prepared speech (teacher assessed) Unprepared speech (teacher assessed)
Role-play	Role-play (teacher assessed) Role-play (peer assessed) Role-play (group assessed)
Observation	Practical performance (teacher observed) Practical performance (peer observed)

Note that the assessment activity is used consistently to name every method and that the assessor is indicated in brackets.

Assessment instruments

Every assessment method uses a particular assessment instrument (also known as an assessment tool). Again it must be noted that we often use terminology related to assessment instruments inappropriately as well. Study the list of assessment methods and the associated instruments below and note how the common name used to refer to the instrument often reflects only one part of the method, either only collecting evidence or assessing evidence, and hardly ever indicating both.

Assessment method	Common name for the instrument	More appropriate name for the instrument
Written test	Test paper	Test question paper & marking memorandum
Assignment	Rubric	Assignment instructions & assessment rubric
Oral	Grid or scoring sheet	Instructions & assessment grid
Worksheet	Memorandum	Worksheet instructions & assessment checklist
Examination	Exam paper & memo	Examination question paper & marking instruments (Note that examination scripts are usually assessed by means of a combination of checklists, memoranda, assessment grids and assessment rubrics.)

We learn from the examples in the table above that, just as with assessment methods, assessment instruments are dual in nature as well. Very often educators as assessors focus on one of the two components, rather than on both when asked about assessment instruments.

As an educator and assessor, you should be able to design your own assessment methods and associated assessment instruments.

To design an assessment means to decide what assessment method or methods to use for a particular purpose and to develop the instrument or instruments associated with the method, within a particular context.

For more information, refer to the activities related to the design of assessment instruments later in this study unit.

One more aspect needs to be considered regarding assessment activities, methods, and instruments, namely the need to constantly review and improve the way we use assessment methods and instruments. Assessment practice is a human endeavour and prone to human error and inconsistent behaviour. In teaching in general, and in assessment in particular, this means that we should never become complacent, in spite of years and years of experience.

The way we instruct and guide learners to do assessment activities, the way we use our assessment instruments and the instruments themselves need to be revised, reviewed and even re-designed regularly to ensure that the credibility of our assessments increases over time rather than diminishes.

This is why quality assurance (moderation) of assessment starts with ensuring – even before the assessment is done – that assessment methods are properly designed and that instruments are developed to assess accurately and effectively what they are intended to assess. It also means that the assessor and moderator ensure that the assessment activity is executed according to the design, especially in the case of formal assessments. Quality assurance is also done after the learners have completed the assessment activity when the educator assesses the evidence, to confirm that objective, fair and correct judgments are made on the evidence provided. After an assessment method has been used, moderation or quality assurance should also be done on the instruments to ensure these are more effective the next time they are used.

Assessment instruments are tools, and just as for the tools in a kitchen, workshop or garden shed, these have to be sharpened, oiled, maintained and cared for regularly.

If you take care of your instruments your assessments will always be credible.

You will find the activities that follow relatively easy to complete as the comments made above provide significant background information relevant to the issues tackled in them. It may be a good idea to read these comments again before you continue.



Activity 4.6

Methods of collecting assessment evidence (introduction)

Study section 4.6 in the prescribed text and respond to the following tasks:

1. *Compare the definition/description in the text of what an assessment method is to that given in the comments above and write your own definition of what an assessment method is.*
2. *Make a list of different purposes for assessment and give a few examples of the assessment methods that are suitable for every purpose. Indicate the assessment activity or activities that learners have to do to provide evidence as well as the instrument you will use to assess the evidence in every case. Do this by copying and completing the table below in your workbook file:*

Assessment purposes and suitable methods for the subject:			
<i>PURPOSE</i>	<i>Assessment method</i>	<i>Assessment activity</i>	<i>Assessment instrument</i>
<i>Formative assessment</i>			
<i>Summative assessment</i>			
<i>Baseline assessment</i>			

3. *Source an actual lesson plan for your subject from a school in your area and compare the plan to the list of aspects to be included in a plan as indicated in the text. Focus on the amount of detail recorded in the lesson plan regarding assessment strategies and comment on the significance of assessment planning as part of lesson planning.*
4. *The prescribed text suggest that educators as assessors should ask several questions when they develop an assessment strategy. Study the list carefully and respond to the following questions:*
 - 4.1 *What is an obvious question not included in the list? Think of your responses to previous questions in this activity as well as where we should start when we want to plan an assessment.*
 - 4.2 *Can you think of any other questions that should be added to the list? Think of the context of your subject as these questions are focused on assessment in general and not on assessment for a particular subject.*
 - 4.3 *Group or categorise the list of questions according to a logic that you regard to be useful.*
5. *Choose any lesson topic or skill prescribed in CAPS for your subject and describe your thinking regarding the assessment of the learners' ability in the topic or skill using the list of questions developed in task 4 above. Do this by using the assessment activity as the main heading and answer all questions in the list, changing every question into a sub-heading and recording the answer under the sub-heading in a few concise sentences. Note that this is a comprehensive task that requires that you apply almost everything you have learnt about assessment in this module.*



Activity 4.6.1

Selecting the most suitable assessment methods

Study section 4.6.1 as well as the CAPS for your subject. Select one theme or topic or skill per category and indicate which assessment method would be most suitable, then list relevant assessment activities learners may do to provide evidence for every category. Do this by copying and completing the following table in your workbook file:

Assessment methods and activities per category for the subject

Subject:

	Knowledge & understanding	Practical skills	Values & Attitudes	Problem solving
Method:				
Activities:				

You may use the examples in section 4.6.1 as well as the list of verbs in table 3.6 to complete this activity. Addendum A might also be helpful in this regard.



Activity 4.6.2

Self-assessment, peer assessment, and group assessment

Study the comments after Activity 4.5 as well as par. 4.6.2 in the prescribed text and reflect on the use of these three approaches in-formative assessment in your subject.

Describe an example of applying each of these approaches in your subject and indicate the benefits and challenges of using each of these approaches in your subject.



Activity 4.6.3

Observation as an assessment method

Study section 4.6.3 in the prescribed text and reflect on what has already been argued in study unit 2 of this study guide and chapter 2 of the prescribed text on the issue of using observations as an assessment approach and method. Also, source the CAPS to identify a skill in your subject that may be assessed using the observation method.

Compare the guidelines for observation provided in chapter 2 with those provided in chapter 4 and comment on similarities and differences.

Describe an example of applying observation in your subject and indicate the benefits and challenges of using this method in your context.



Activity 4.6.4

Paper-based assessment methods

Study the comments after activity 4.5, above, as well as section 4.6.4 in the prescribed text and reflect on the use, in your subject, of the three types of paper-based methods. You may find the below example, taken from a Grade 10 CAPS textbook for Tourism, useful.

EXAMPLE: CASE STUDY

Mr. and Mrs. Hartley and their two boys, from Australia, are visiting relatives in South Africa. They have booked at the four star Oaks Guesthouse in the Cape Winelands, just a short drive from Cape Town. The eight en-suite bedrooms are all equipped with air conditioners, direct dialing telephones, interactive TV, mini safe, and wi-fi. An English breakfast and buffet lunch are included, and an a la carte dinner is available on request. Nearby attractions include Table Mountain, Grand West Casino, the Cape Town Conference Centre, Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, and Green Point Stadium.

Questions for Term 1: Tourism sectors

- a. Name the four tourism sectors that will ensure this family experiences a memorable holiday. (4)
- b. What is a tourist? (2)
- c. What type of tourists is the Hartley family?
- d. Explain, in point form, the grading procedure that was followed for Oaks Guest House to be awarded a four-star rating. (7)
- e. Explain the following terms that occur in the case study:
 - en suite bedroom (1)
 - interactive TV (1)
 - a la carte (1)
- f. Suggest and describe three in-room technology devices that may satisfy the family's environmental responsibility needs. (6)
- g. Name one suitable mode of transport for the family to use while in Cape Town and give a reason for its suitability (4)
- h. The family spends three days in Johannesburg. Compare economy air and rail transport options with regard to speed and comfort. (4)
- i. Classify the attractions listed in the case study according to their appropriate attraction subsector. (5)

TOTAL MARKS: 50

(Source: Brown et al 2012, adapted)

Describe an example of applying each of these written types of assessment methods in your subject and indicate the benefits and challenges of using each of these in your subject.

Activity 4.6.5  **Oral assessments**

Study the comments after activity 4.5 as well as section 4.6.5 in the prescribed text and reflect on the use of oral assessments in your subject.

Describe an example of applying oral assessment methods in your subject and indicate the benefits and challenges of using each of these in your subject.

Activity 4.6.6  **Practical task assessments**

Study section 4.6.6 in the prescribed text and reflect on the use of such practical assessments in your subject.

Describe an example of applying an assessment of practical tasks in your subject and indicate the benefits and challenges of using each of these in your subject.

The series of activities you have just completed required that you reflect (think about) the way you do or would do an assessment by applying different assessment methods in your subject. Reflecting or thinking is mostly theoretical. When we record our assessments, they become real, tangible and practical. The activities that follow are designed to assist you in understanding and applying recording and reporting of assessments.

You may find it useful to revise the comments made after activity 4.5 again, especially those made on the recording of assessment evidence before you tackle the activities that follow.



Activity 4.7 **Recording and reporting learner performance (introduction)**

Distinguish between recording and reporting in an assessment context. Refer to a practical example of an assessment done in your subject to illustrate your distinction.



Activity 4.7.1 **Recording and reporting using the teacher's portfolio**

Study section 4.7.1 as well as the CAPS for your subject and compile a table of contents for such a portfolio.



Activity 4.7.2 **Recording by means of assessment tools or instruments**

Study section 4.7.2 in its entirety as well as the comments following activity 4.5. Also, study the guidelines for designing and developing assessment instruments and respond to the following tasks in your workbook file:

- 1. Provide a working definition of what an assessment instrument (also known as an assessment tool) is.*
- 2. List at least seven assessment tools or instruments commonly used in school contexts. Name every instrument listed according to the framework suggested in the comments and guidelines provided in this study guide.*
- 3. Give a brief description of each of the instruments listed above. Indicate for which context every instrument is useful.*
- 4. What is recorded in an assessment instrument – assessment evidence or assessment judgments? Illustrate your response by means of examples.*
- 5. Compile a set of guidelines for the design of every one of the types of assessment instruments/tools you listed earlier in this activity.*
- 6. Critique every example of assessment instruments contained in section 4.7 (Tables 4.3 to 4.7) in terms of the guidelines that you have developed. (Refer to the note below.)*
- 7. Describe any assessment activity in your subject, for example, making posters on substance abuse in Life Orientation as part of peer-assessed group work for Grade 10.*

Then design and develop an appropriate assessment instrument (assessment checklist, or grid or rubric for assessing the activity) using the guidelines you developed earlier in this activity. Also, consider the section on assessment criteria in activity 1.4.2 in study unit 1 of this study guide.

8. *Design two more similar activities for which the other two types of instruments may be used and develop the instruments for these two activities also, using the same guidelines as in the previous task.*
9. *Use all references to instrument design and development in the prescribed text and this study guide, and the guidelines for developing written tests and examinations in section 4.6.4 of the prescribed text specifically and develop a term test and an end-of-year examination for your subject.*

The following excerpt from a CAPS textbook for Business Studies suggesting the structure of the tests, the mid-year examination, and the final examination may be helpful here. You may want to consult CAPS textbooks in your subject and get a sense of how assessment instruments, in general, are structured and how tests and examination papers are structured in your subject.

Bear in mind that the instruments you develop need to be user-friendly and ready for use. Make sure that you include all details in your design:

- *The subject, grade, theme, instrument title (e.g. Peer assessment – Business plans)*
- *space for learner surname, name, class, date, etc*
- *space for assessor and moderator to date and sign the instrument*

Study the excerpt below for information on structuring tests and examination papers.

About Business Studies tests

You will write a formal assessment test at the end of each term. A Business Studies test may look like this. This is just a guideline.

Section	Description	Marks
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Compulsory</i> - <i>Different types of short questions</i> - <i>15 questions x 2 marks</i> 	30
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Choose any three of four questions</i> - <i>Answer in paragraph style</i> - <i>Case studies, scenarios or source based questions can be included</i> - <i>3 questions, 30 marks each</i> 	90
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Choose any two of three questions</i> - <i>Answer in paragraph style</i> - <i>2 questions, 40 marks each</i> 	80
TOTAL		200

A Grade 10 mid-year examination counts 200 marks (2 hours). This is only a guideline

Section	Description	Marks	Time
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compulsory - Different types of short questions - 20 questions x 2 marks 	40	30 min
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose any three of five questions - Answer in paragraph style - Case studies, scenarios or source based questions can be included 3 questions, 60 marks each 	180	90 min
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose any two of four questions - Answer in paragraph style - 1 question, 40 marks 	80	60 min
TOTAL		300	3 hours

A Business Studies final exam looks like this:

Section	Description	Marks
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compulsory - Different types of short questions - 10 questions x 2 marks 	20
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Answer in paragraph style - Case studies, scenarios or source based questions can be included 	40
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose any two of four questions - Answer in paragraph style - 1 question, 40 marks 	40
TOTAL		100

(Source: Dicks 2012:2)



Comment

Some additional guidelines for the design and development of assessment instruments are provided below. You will find these very useful when designing or developing assessment instruments for your context.

Additional guidelines for designing assessment instruments

Bear the following guidelines in mind when designing or developing your own assessment instruments:

- 1 Start by making sure exactly what you want the learners to do to produce assessment evidence that will be valid for assessment. Do this by describing the assessment activity in clear detail. This description need not be extensive, but should focus on the following key areas:
 - The subject, Grade, Formative or Summative assessment, and the actual activity including a brief description.
 - E.g. Tourism Grade 10 – Formative Assessment – Assessment activity:
Case study on tourist attractions
(Learners, working in pairs, complete a case study on tourist attractions in one of the provinces in South Africa.)
- 2 Decide which assessment instrument would be most appropriate, taking into account the activity and who would be assessing the evidence – the teacher, the peers, or the learner doing self-assessment. You may decide to use a checklist, or an assessment grid, or an assessment rubric.

Note that the guidelines below are focused on these three basic assessment instruments only.

Guidelines for designing and developing an assessment checklist

- 1 Checklists determine only whether criteria have been met and this is usually indicated by means of ticking off the criteria that have been met.
- 2 Because checklists check only criteria, every tick is worth the same as any other.
- 3 In addition, it must be noted that ALL the criteria need to be achieved in a task suitable for assessment using a checklist. For example, when learners have to draw a human face, the criteria might be that:
 - the shape of a face is clearly drawn
 - two eyes are drawn and correctly positioned
 - two ears are drawn and correctly positioned
 - a nose is drawn, showing two nostrils, and is correctly positioned
 - a mouth is drawn and correctly positioned
 - hair is drawn and is drawn in a recognisable style
 - all parts of the face are drawn in reasonable proportion to one another in terms of size and position, ...

The omission of any criterion, or a few criteria, would mean that the task is incomplete and that what has been drawn would not be considered to be a human face.
- 4 Checklists have to list all the aspects and criteria to be assessed or checked. In the same way, the memorandum to a question in a test should include all the aspects of the answer to the question. This is why checklists are similar to marking memoranda.
- 5 The criteria checked have to be described in clear detail to indicate the quality of the performance in observable and measurable terms.

- 6 Checklists, like any other assessment instrument, have to indicate the total score and the minimum standard required in terms of the number of criteria to be met. The minimum standard for a checklist is usually the same as the number of criteria to be checked, as noted in points 3 and 4 above.
- 7 The instrument itself (usually a document printed on one page) must include all other relevant information, such as the caption, title, and heading; grade; space for the name of the learner; the topic assessed; space for the assessor and moderator to sign; date of assessment; and so on.
- 8 It has to be user-friendly, practical and complete – a properly designed and developed checklist is edited in terms of language and technical specifications so that it may be duplicated and distributed or published for use by other educators and assessors as well.

Guidelines for the design and development of assessment grids

- 1 The criteria and aspects assessed in a grid also have to be described in detail to indicate the quality of the learner's performance in terms of observable and measurable detail. Some assessment grids used in schools are very vague and sometimes do not describe the quality of performance at all.

Consider the comparison below:

Vague criteria (Essay writing)	Observable and measurable criteria (Essay writing)
Topic	The topic is thought-provoking and interesting.
Introduction	The topic is introduced to the reader in a creative and unique manner, stimulating curiosity and interest.
Main ideas, events, arguments	The ideas, events, arguments and the like are presented with logic and in properly structured sentences and paragraphs.
Conclusion	The essay is concluded by means of a creative ending or concluding remark or paragraph.
Spelling and grammar	There are no spelling errors and almost no language errors. Clear evidence exists that the essay was edited prior to submission.

- 2 Assessment grids check not only whether criteria have been met; they also indicate the value of the criteria and the quality of the performance by means of marks and scores.
- 3 The relative contribution of every criterion to the overall performance is indicated by means of weighting criteria differently, rather than awarding the same mark to all criteria. Such weighting of criteria clearly indicates that some criteria contribute more, and others less, towards the overall required performance. Indeed, if a grid awards the same score to all criteria, it is not really a grid, but a checklist! Consider the weighting of criteria in the example below.

Assessment criteria for essay writing	Marks	Learner Scores
The topic is thought-provoking and interesting.	4	
The topic is introduced to the reader in a creative and unique manner stimulating curiosity and interest.	3	
The ideas, events, arguments and the like are presented with logic and in properly structured sentences and paragraphs.	7	
The essay is concluded by means of a creative ending or concluding remark or paragraph.	5	
There are no spelling errors and almost no language errors. Clear evidence exists that the essay was edited prior to submission.	6	
A total score below 15 is regarded as inadequate for this subject.	25	

- 4 The total is also important here as a minimum standard will apply when you use assessment grids. The minimum standard must make logical sense and should not be an arbitrary number or score. Also, beware of simply applying the same “pass mark” as suggested in the standards reflected in departmental policy documents. Note that the designer of the example above regards 15/25 (60%) to be the minimum standard for the task.
- 5 The instrument itself (usually a document printed on one page) has to include all other relevant information, such as the caption, title or heading; grade; space for the name of the learner; the topic assessed; space for the assessor and moderator to sign; date of assessment and so on.
- 6 It must also be user-friendly, practical and complete – a properly designed and developed grid is edited in terms of language and technical specifications so that it may be duplicated and distributed, or published for use by other educators and assessors as well.

Guidelines for designing and developing assessment rubrics

- 1 The criteria and aspects assessed by means of a rubric, as in a grid, have to be described in detail to indicate the quality of a performance of the learner in terms of observable and measurable features.
- 2 Rubrics go one step further than grids and indicate different levels of competence in a performance and/or criteria. In rubrics, the different levels of performance quality are described in terms of the assessment criteria, rather than by using subjective descriptors such as excellent, good, average, satisfactory, poor and so on. What is good for one assessor, may be average, or even only satisfactory, for the next.
- 3 As is the case with grids, when rubrics are designed, the relative weight of criteria may also differ – indeed should differ – as no set of criteria contribute equally to the overall performance of a task.

- 4 Totals and minimum standards are also applicable when designing rubrics, and for the same arguments.
- 5 When designing scores for different levels in a rubric, beware of the following common weaknesses:
 - awarding marks for nothing or for very little effort by learners for a particular aspect
 - awarding relatively high marks for work that is below standard
 - awarding the same mark for all criteria
- 6 The instrument itself (usually a document printed on one page) has to include all other relevant information, such as the caption, title, and heading; grade; space for the name of the learner; the topic assessed; space for the assessor and moderator to sign; date of assessment and so on.
- 7 It has to be user-friendly, practical and complete – a properly designed and developed rubric is edited in terms of language and technical specifications so that it may be duplicated and distributed or published for use by other educators and assessors as well.

This concludes activity 4.7.2. We now turn our attention to record keeping.



Activity 4.7.3 **Record keeping**

Study section 4.7.3 in the prescribed text and respond to the following in your workbook file:

1. *What is the difference between “record keeping” and “recording of assessments” – both in the context of this study and in the context of the work of the educator as an assessor?*
2. *Why is it so important that teachers should keep a meticulous record of assessment processes and learner achievements?*
3. *What records are required to be kept regarding assessment for your subject? Refer to CAPS in this regard.*
4. *List all the aspects to be included in the records as indicated in section 4.7.3.*



Activity 4.7.4 **Assessment schedules**

Study section 4.7.4 and give a brief account of what an assessment schedule is in terms of the requirements laid down by the Department of Basic Education. List all aspects to be reflected on such a schedule.



Activity 4.7.5 **Reports and report writing**

Respond to the following by consulting all aspects reflected in section 4.7.5 of the prescribed text:

1. *List the requirements that all school report cards should meet.*
2. *Access a report card from a school near you. Check if all aspects reflected in Table 4.8 in the prescribed text are also reflected in the card.*

3. *How do report cards for learners in the FET differ from report cards in other phases?*



Comment

I think that assessment adds a lot of paperwork to a load of administrative tasks teachers already have. It goes with the territory, as they say.

I also think that the educator acting as an assessor would find this load a bit more manageable if the assessment instruments used were to be cleverly designed and developed. This means that you should never just accept recording and reporting instruments in literature such as CAPS textbooks and Department of Basic Education guidelines or handouts on face value.

Always scrutinise any assessment instrument or recording format or record keeping system within the context of your subject and the assessment policy of your school and adapt it fit into the existing system at the school rather than adding onto the existing system.

Technically, assessment in FET for TVET falls outside of the scope of this study of assessment which focuses on the educator as assessor in the school context. Assessment in FET for TVET takes place as part of the education programmes of the so-called FET Colleges.

Some teachers in the FET in schools may want to teach in the FET colleges where Technical and Vocational Education and Training are provided to learners who have left the school system before they reached Grade 12 and want to prepare for a vocation or career along the alternative FET route.

The following activity dwells on the unique nature of assessment in FET for TVET.



Activity 4.8

The unique nature of assessment in FET for TVET

Summarise your understanding of assessment in FET for TVET by responding to the following tasks after you have studied par 4.8 in the prescribed text:

1. *Which state department is responsible for FET in TVET?*
2. *Level 4 in TVET is equal to what grade in schools?*
3. *What tasks, in terms of assessment for FET in TVET, are required of FET colleges? Mention eight tasks.*
4. *Briefly, describe the assessment framework and features of FET for TVET.*
5. *Provide an overview of assessment methods, instruments, and evidence used in TVET contexts. Present your overview in table format.*
6. *Explain the acronym ICASS and indicate what criteria are set for assessment tasks in ICASS contexts.*
7. *Explain the acronym ISAT and indicate the two ways in which this type of assessment is applied in TVET contexts.*
8. *Describe the nature and minimum requirements for the External National Examinations used in certifying learners in the FET for TVET.*

Rethink and reflect 

Maybe it would be prudent to simply conclude this study guide with a few randomly chosen quotes on assessment as food for continued thought!

“All assessment is a perpetual work in progress.”

- Linda Suske

“An approximate answer to the right question is worth a good deal more than an exact answer to an approximate question.”

- JW Tukey

“Description of a grade: An inadequate report of an inaccurate judgment by a biased and variable judge of the extent to which a student has attained an undefined level of mastery of an unknown proportion of an indefinite material.”

- P Dressel

“Actions speak louder than words.”

- Theodore Roosevelt

“Experience is a hard teacher because it gives the test first, the lesson afterward.”

- Vernon Law

“For every complex question there is a simple answer – and it’s wrong.”

- HL Mencken

“Make no judgment where you have no compassion.”

- Anne McCaffrey

“The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.”

- Unknown

“We do not know who we are until we see what we can do.”

- Martha Grimes

“Remember that half the people you know are below average.”

- Unknown

“In examinations, those who do not wish to know ask questions of those who cannot tell.”

- Sir Walter Raleigh

“Make assessment a vision worth working toward.”

- Thomas Angelo

(Source: West Kentucky University 2012.)

ADDENDUM A – ASSESSMENT METHODS

	Description	Best used for	Advantages	Disadvantages
	Observing the learner performing the activity in reality or the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skills application - Workplace testing - Testing application and understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authenticity. - Identifies gaps/success first hand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not always convenient - Nervousness of learners
	Written answers to set questions from memory and/or ability to apply learning to set problems.	Testing knowledge, procedure, problem-solving, understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can be used for large numbers of learners. - The evidence is recorded and can be stored. - Useful in norm-referencing contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making onerous (burdensome) demands on learners and assessors - Emphasis on rote learning - Stressful for learners
	Assess learner’s ability to listen, interpret and communicate their thinking.	Checking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding - and knowledge - attitudes and - behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quick. - Can clarify responses. - Useful for in-depth assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nervousness of learners - Require good language skills of both parties
	Learner acts out a role similar to real life.	Assessing a range of behavioural and interpersonal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows understanding of content. - Having control of the situation. - Cost effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Situation not real - Dependent on quality of the other party’s role
	The learner does a problem-solving exercise with clear guidelines and of specified length.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test knowledge - Application of knowledge - Research and thinking skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enough time to show knowledge and skills. - Ability to evaluate critical outcomes. - Ability to evaluate embedded knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authenticity concerns - Time consuming - Marking is demanding and difficult - Large volumes of complex evidence

	Learner responds to a structured set of questions and interacts with the assessor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Testing knowledge - Thinking skills - Insight and deeper understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can clarify answers. - Observation of behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time consuming - Nervousness of learner
	Evidence of learning demonstrated in documents also used for other purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proof of learning - RPL - Portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learner takes responsibility. - Critical outcomes can be specified. - Experience is recognised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on collected evidence rather than learning - Duplication - Relevance sometimes questionable
	Description of an event or scenario, learner responds to questions and tasks.	Assessing learner's ability to analyse, apply and draw conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Saves time. - A wide range of experiences can be assessed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not real - Not relevant to learner
	The learner does stage/supervised assignments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge and application - Academic skills - Application of complex issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A wide range of skills can be assessed. - Application of knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time consuming - Tedious to assess - Authenticity concerns
	Real-life situations recreated in a simulated setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application of complex issues - Wide range of skills to be assessed - Critical cross-field outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost-effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not real
	A variety of evidence collected by the learner to demonstrate competence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Situations where direct observation is difficult - RPL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The learner is allowed time to show competence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May not be authentic - Time consuming

(Source: Van Schalkwyk & Wydeman 2009:42&43, adapted)

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