

Standards Unit

IMPROVING DIFFERENTIATION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

TOPIC 4: DIFFERENTIATION BY ASSESSMENT

FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

Activity 2: Exploring formative assessment and feedback (1 hr, 15 mins)

Facilitator notes

This activity focuses on formative assessment and 'feedback'. Before doing this activity participants should already have explored the different purposes of assessment or been introduced to them. The purpose of formative assessment should have been established. A suggested definition, which can be found in the glossary of terms, is:

Regular checking of individual learners' progress throughout their programme, within and outside teaching and learning sessions, followed by constructive feedback.

PowerPoint slides

PowerPoint Slide 10 shows the objectives for this session.

Slide 11 shows the definition above.

Slide 12 can be used as a reminder of the importance of formative assessment and feedback for both the learner and the teacher or trainer, and as a link to the previous activity.

Now read the activity.

Objectives

- To understand the value of formative assessment and feedback.
- To explore the formative assessment and

feedback methods you use and to evaluate their advantages and limitations.

Resources

PowerPoint Slides 10-18

A grid on which participants record their responses to the activity.

Facilitator notes

PowerPoint Slides 13 to 15 refer to research findings and can be used before embarking on the activity to introduce the importance of constructive feedback as part of formative assessment. Alternatively, you may prefer participants to do the first stage of the task and then show the slides and make links or emphasise emerging messages.

The slide about grading may lead to a lot of discussion. Some participants may defend an element of competition and say it motivates their learners. It's important not to be drawn into over-lengthy discussions. Participants will have to use their judgement on this, taking account of their particular learners. A compromise may well be possible. Don't forget, too, that we're looking at formative not summative assessment where, clearly, grading is required.

It's important to come back to the value of feedback and to emphasise this before proceeding with the activity.

Allow 10-15 minutes for presentation and discussion of slides.

The activity is in three stages. Organise participants in groups of three or four. The composition of the groups is not critical but if you have teachers or trainers from different curriculum areas it could be beneficial to mix them as they may have different approaches to formative assessment which they can compare.

Hand out a blank grid to each participant but ask one member of each group to be responsible for an agreed group version and for feeding back to the main group. Go through the instructions for the first stage with participants.

Stage 1 (in groups of three or four) (20 mins in groups) (15-20 mins for feedback and discussion)

- Identify and list the different methods you use to check understanding and learning in a session.
- What do you think are the advantages and limitations of each? Consider, in particular, the extent to which each method enables you to assess the progress of all learners.
- Record these on the grid you have been given, leaving the final column blank.
- One person from each group should feed back to the main group.

Facilitator notes

To manage the feedback, ask each group to present one method at a time, in turn. As facilitator, you can check where other groups have identified the same or a similar method and thereby avoid repetition. You may want to ask groups to display their grids and allow time for viewing.

In the discussion time you may want to look at:

- the range of methods identified;
- similarities and differences between

curriculum areas;

- those that are most commonly used;
- any new or unusual methods;
- when you might use the different methods and why.

Draw together any key messages.

Introduce Stage 2 of the activity. You may want to use PowerPoint Slide 16 to do this. As participants complete the final column they may find they want to enter more than one response. For example, a short computer-generated test will be both 'computer-based' and 'self-assessment'.

Stage 2 (in groups of three or four) (15 mins in small groups)

- Look again at the methods you have recorded on your chart.
- For each method note down in the 'Who/how?' column whether it's:
 - teacher or trainer-led assessment;
 - self-assessment;
 - peer-assessment;
 - computer-based assessment.
- Discuss the extent to which the methods are teacher or trainer-led and whether a wider range of approaches could have been used or existing methods could have been adapted.
- Agree two or three changes you could make to how you check learning and feed these back to the whole group. These may be new methods you would adopt or adaptations to methods you currently use.

Stage 3 (as a whole group) (15 mins)

Ask a representative from each group to feedback one change they've agreed.

Facilitator notes

Your role is to facilitate the feedback and discussion. Participants often conclude that the methods they currently use to check learning

and give constructive feedback are satisfactory. They can in fact be adapted to make learners more reflective and involved in the process.

By the end of this whole activity participants should be thinking about the following:

- the importance of checking learning and feeding back to learners regularly during sessions;
- the contribution constructive feedback makes to learners' progress;
- how feedback can help teachers or trainers to reflect on and adjust their teaching to meet learners' needs;
- the range of different methods of assessing learning – and the fact that these do not all need to be teacher or trainer-led;
- which methods best help you to meet the individual needs of learners.

These key points are shown on Slide 17 and you can spend five minutes using this summary if you wish. Slide 18 shows where feedback is referred to in the Common Inspection Framework. It may be useful to make the link if participants are approaching inspection.