The formality and complexity of self assessment can vary considerably. Learners can be asked to respond to a simple question. Alternatively, they may be encouraged to use a complex self assessment grid which describes each of the possible levels in detail and assesses more than one skill. Such grids are not infrequently used to help learners assess their own learning and will be discussed more fully in Unit Two.

1.10.2   Peer feedback

Teachers should not be the only ones responsible for providing feedback on learners' learning. As we have suggested above, if we want learners to understand how they are assessed, they need to become much more involved in the assessment process. Learners need to develop the confidence and ability to monitor their own progress and to co-operate with classmates so that they can help each other. Peers may have a different perspective or angle from the teacher when looking at each other's work and they should be provided the opportunity to share their views. It must, however, be remembered that peers will need to be trained in giving feedback (see also the need for learner training discussed in section 1.10.1). Learners may at first be reluctant to criticise their friends' work and they may not want other learners to see their own output.

If the purpose of peer feedback is to help learners understand assessment criteria, then the assessment criteria used for providing peer feedback should reflect the same criteria as those used by the teacher. During an oral presentation learners can, for example, be asked to fill in a questionnaire based on the assessment criteria to be used by the teacher. They can alternatively be asked to focus on a specific aspect of the presentation so that some learners provide feedback on the content, others on language while others on communicative strategies such as maintaining eye contact and using body language. It should, however, be borne in mind that if feedback sheets are to be effective, they should not be overly complex and difficult to complete by peers.

1.11 Evaluating tasks designed for assessment

> **Reflect**
>
> *How do you know whether a task you have developed for assessment purposes worked well or not? What factors do you need to consider?*

In section 1.7 on *'How assessment tasks are developed',* we indicated that there is a 7th step to designing any assessment task. It is, in fact, that of evaluating the task after it has been administered, completed and the learners have been given feedback on it. You will, of course, have information on how well learners performed on the task, but that is only part of the story. You will also have your own observations of how learners worked through the task, what questions they asked you and whether they seemed to be completing the task smoothly or not (see section 1.9.2).

But you will need to tap one further source of information. If, for example, learners do not perform as well as you would have expected, you need to know why. It may be that your instructions were not clear, or you may have given insufficient time to complete the task to the level required. You can find this information from your learners, either through informal feedback or more formal feedback such as an evaluation form.

Reflect

Now that you understand the theory underpinning TBA, consider your own teaching situation and answer the following questions:

1. *How and to what extent do you need to adapt your assessment practices to meet the requirements of TBA?*
2. *What additional help do you need to ensure that changes in your assessment procedures lead to improved learning?*
3. *Draw up a timeline for introducing changes to your assessment practices indicating which changes you can start to introduce more or less immediately and which changes will need more time.*