

Introduction

Although the package introduces key theoretical concepts in assessment in general, and in task-based assessment in particular, the main thrust is practical. To that end, in the body of the package, we set out a step-by-step procedure for developing assessment tasks.

- **To help teachers establish criteria for assessing learner performance which take into account the need for consistency, fairness, transparency and accountability.**

A key principle underpinning this package is the importance of integrating learning and teaching. We show how most teaching tasks can also be used for assessment, the main difference being that assessment tasks must be accompanied by criteria for evaluating learner performance.

- **To help teachers adapt appropriate feedback tools for both oral and written formative assessment tasks.**

The provision of appropriate feedback is fundamental for formative assessment. The nature of the feedback will determine whether or not learners are able to use the assessment to improve their performance.

Having worked through the package systematically, working independently or collaboratively, teachers should be able to develop their own bank of both formative and summative assessment tasks.

What is included in the package?

The package includes the following:

- An introduction to the concepts of task-based language teaching and task-based assessment along with a discussion of the place of task-based assessment within the school-based English Language curriculum
- A discussion of key assessment concepts including: indirect versus direct assessment, norm-referenced versus criterion-referenced assessment, proficiency versus achievement assessment, formative versus summative assessment
- A step-by-step procedure for developing assessment tasks
- Techniques for providing feedback to learners including conferencing, observation, and journaling
- A description of the roles of teachers and learners within the assessment process, with a particular focus on learner self and peer assessment
- An introduction to and rationale for formative assessment along with the provision of techniques for designing / using formative assessment instruments and giving feedback to learners
- A description of the characteristics of summative assessment along with considerations and criteria for designing and evaluating summative assessment tasks
- Four moderated sets of tasks which can be used for summative assessment or can be modified by teachers for their own assessment purposes

- Examples of moderated assessment performances for both speaking and writing
- Frequently asked questions and an annotated bibliography

How can the package be used?

The package is designed to be used in a number of ways. We were particularly aware of the need for a package that could be used either individually or collaboratively in workshop mode.

Individually

If you are using the package individually, then we recommend that you adopt the following procedure:

- Skim through the package to get an overview of what it contains and how it is structured.
- If you are unfamiliar with assessment and assessment procedures, read an introductory article or chapter to help you create schematic knowledge. A good general introduction is Brindley (2003).
- Create a study plan, deciding how much time that you have available to work through the package, and how much time you need to devote to each section. You may decide, for instance, that you are familiar with key assessment concepts from a previous course, and that you can therefore skip this section.
- Read through each section, and complete the reflection boxes as you come to them.
- If possible, establish contact with another teacher who is in the process of completing the package and arrange to share the outcomes of your reflection.
- List those topics that you would like to know more about. Consult the list of recommended readings, reviewing the table of contents and index for each book, and create your own follow-up reading plan.

Collaboratively

If you are a workshop coordinator, we recommend adapting the following 5 x 3-hour format for using the package to cater for the needs of the participants.