

Professional Development Strand  
Elective Unit

## **Advanced Practices in Assessment and Evaluation**



**Student Support Material**

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## Unit outline

Unit		Elective
<b>PD Elective</b> <b>Advanced Practices in Assessment and Evaluation</b>		<b>Advanced Practices in Assessment and Evaluation</b>

## Icons



Read or research



Write or summarise



Activity or discussion

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# PD Elective Unit: Advanced Practices in Assessment and Evaluation

## Rationale

This unit provides resource material for teaching the elective unit Advanced Practices in Assessment and Evaluation. The actual break-up of topics and time allocation is flexible, and to be decided upon by the lecturer. Elective units are listed in the National Curriculum Guidelines as being three credit points.

This unit revises basic concepts of assessment and introduces advanced data gathering techniques, focused upon measuring the growth and achievement of the individual. The role of assessment in the reform curriculum is discussed.

Assessment and evaluation is perceived to be an integral part of the teaching and learning process, especially in monitoring and reporting on learner's progress at different levels or stages of development. The reform curriculum requires teachers to take a systematic and continuous approach to assessment, which are compatible with new curriculum approaches, integral to teaching activities and based on a balanced approach.

## Objectives

By the end of this unit you will be able to:

1. define the key terms used in assessment and evaluation
2. describe the purposes of assessment and evaluation
3. describe the components of a balanced assessment program
4. describe assessment requirements as outlined in the national curriculum statement for Papua New Guinea (2003)
5. demonstrate methods and techniques of data gathering and ongoing monitoring of student progress
6. demonstrate methods of effective test design
7. select appropriate assessment and evaluation techniques and strategies to monitor individual student's progress
8. relate assessment and evaluation information to ongoing planning for individuals and the class.

## How to use this material

This module is written as a series of topics, identified in the table of contents, and by their large subheadings. Each topic includes some readings and activities to complete.

Your lecturer will guide you through the materials during the lecture program.

Sometimes, you may work directly from this booklet during the lecture. Sometimes, your lecturer may ask you to complete an activity or reading for homework. Your lecturer may include additional information and topics.

Major topics include:

1. assessment; revising the terms
2. constructivist theories of learning
3. new ways of assessing
4. information gathering techniques
5. monitoring and assessing children's literacy learning in the bridging classes.

## Assessment

Your lecturer will provide details of assessment requirements during the first week of lectures. These assessment tasks will provide the opportunity for you to show your understanding and apply your knowledge to practical situations.

## References

The student support materials contain all the readings necessary to complete the unit. These readings have been adapted from the following texts:

- Barry, K. and King, L. (1998). *Beginning Teaching and Beyond (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)*. Social Science Press: Wentworth Falls, NSW, Australia.
- Burke, K. (1999). *How to Assess Authentic Learning (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)*. Skylight Training and Publishing Inc.
- Mariko, S. (2000). *Assessment and Evaluation Student booklet*; Professional Development Strand, Madang Teachers College: Madang.
- Marsh, C. (2000). *Handbook for beginning teachers. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)*. Longman: Australia.
- Mc Burney-Fry, G. (1998). *Improving your Practicum*. Social Science Press: Australia.
- National Department of Education (PNG) (2002). In-service Units to Support the Implementation of Edition 1 Lower Primary Reform Curriculum *Study Guide: Unit 2: Bridging to English in Lower Primary*.
- National Department of Education (PNG) (1994). *Classroom Testing*. Measurement Services Unit: Port Moresby.
- National Department of Education (PNG) (2003). *National Curriculum Statement for Papua New Guinea 2003*.
- PASTEP (2001). *Social and Spiritual Strand Unit 5: Teaching Methods. Student Support Material*. Port Moresby.
- Wilson, J. and Fehring, H. (1995). *Keying into Assessment*. OUP: Melbourne.

# Advanced Practices in Assessment and Evaluation

## Introduction

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### Activity 1

*Write down your definition of assessment and evaluation in your own words. Share with your group. Underline the words in your definition which are important in describing your view of assessment and evaluation.*

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The term ‘assessment’ refers to the **collection of information** about a student’s learning achievements and the effectiveness of educational programs. (*Wilson & Fehring, 1995, p.3*) It is the process of collecting, analysing, recording and interpreting information about student learning. It can occur during a variety of activities or tasks which require students to:

1. show or demonstrate their understanding
2. apply their learning in different contexts
3. apply their learning using various forms of data
4. undertake guided investigation
5. express themselves in a variety of modes
6. contribute to co-operative activities or exercises
7. evaluate their own understanding and performance.

Students learn in many different ways and have many different skills. When students have to show how much they have learned, or what their skills are, they should be allowed to do so in many different ways. The kinds of assessment tasks that you use should be closely related to the kinds of skills or knowledge you have been teaching. For example, if you have been teaching children how to play a particular game you should test them by watching them play, not by asking them to write down the rules of the game.

A variety of assessment strategies should be used and students should be given opportunities, in varying contexts, to demonstrate in an authentic manner what they know, understand and can do.

Judgements about achievement should not be based on one piece of evidence or performance in only one context, but a single task can often measure achievement in relation to several objectives. When you set a task make sure that:

- the requirements of the task are as clear as possible
- questions or activities are chosen that are relevant to the objectives and allow students to demonstrate appropriate outcomes
- any sources or stimulus material used are clear and appropriate to the task
- that the task is not too easy or too difficult
- there is a balanced selection of skills and knowledge objectives being assessed
- achievement is measured in terms of more than one objective
- marks or grades reflect the relative importance of each part of the task
- instructions are clear and concise
- the language level is appropriate for the grade
- it does not contain gender, cultural or any other bias
- the marking scheme is applied consistently
- materials and equipment required are available to the student
- adequate time is allowed for completion of the task.

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 **Activity 2**

*Describe the types of assessment tasks you have seen being used by teachers in the classroom. What types of knowledge, skills and attitudes were being assessed, and how?*

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## ***Assessment: revising the terms***

As teachers, we gather data, or information about what students have learnt and how they went about their learning, and we can do this in many different ways. We then use this data/information to make value judgements about achievement in a particular subject (or learning area), attitudes towards learning, strengths and weaknesses in a specific skill, knowledge and understanding of process etc. Different types of assessment are used for different purposes. A summary of assessment types and terms follows.

### **Formative assessment**

Formative assessment is a term used to refer to **continuous** or **ongoing** assessment and evaluation processes. Formative techniques are often informal and are closely linked to the teaching and learning practices in the classroom eg anecdotal records, learning logs, reflective journals, contracts and goal- based assessment.

## Summative assessment

Summative assessment refers to assessment practices that are undertaken **at a particular time** – often at the end of a unit of work, a subject, a year of study or a course. The purpose of this form of assessment is to **sum up** the achievement of a student.

## Evaluation

In the strict sense, evaluation is the major step in the overall process but it must be preceded by measurement and /or assessment. Neither the measurement nor assessment processes involve judgements about the worth of a score, rating or ranking.

The term ‘evaluation’ is used to denote the making of **value judgements** about students’ work. Having collected the information relating to one or more of the syllabus areas, teachers make judgements about competencies, skill development, attitudes, and general change and growth in learning. We use various benchmarks (or yardsticks) to make such judgements. We also use assessment data to make judgements about our teaching and learning methods, curriculum programs and resources in terms of their effectiveness.

## Norm referenced assessment

Norm referenced assessment is a formal technique whereby a student is **compared with a standard**, or **level of performance**, of a group of students who have previously undertaken the same activity or task.

The ‘**norm**’, average or typical expectation of the group becomes the **standard** with which to compare the achievements of individual students in the future.

The purpose of this form of assessment and evaluation is literally to **compare** student’s work on a particular activity/ task. These ‘tests’ are often criticised because the tasks are taken out of context (decontextualised) from the everyday classroom curriculum.

## Criterion referenced assessment

Criterion – referenced assessment assists teachers in interpreting information in respect to a student’s performance **against set criteria**. It is an absolute measure. For example, if John’s teacher had stated that he must get 9 out of 10 items correct in order to show mastery of the task, then 7 out of 10 would be interpreted as non-achievement of mastery.

## ***What is different about assessment now?***

The methods of assessment used in schools are often determined by beliefs about learning. Early theories of learning viewed learning as a ‘building blocks of knowledge’ approach whereby students acquired complex higher order skills by breaking learning down into a series of skills. Every skill had a pre-requisite skill and if the basic skills were learnt, they could be put together, or assembled into more complex thinking.

Students who had trouble memorising basic skills out of context were often labelled slow learners. Some of these students would become so bored and frustrated after years of drill and skill work that they never developed the thinking skills needed to solve real world problems. They rarely had the opportunity to experience a motivating or challenging curriculum or

discover knowledge for themselves. The result would be these students would drop out of school.

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 **Activity 3**

*Do you agree with the statements above? Do you think students drop out of school because they may see themselves as failures? How could the assessment and evaluation system contribute to this? Discuss with your group.*

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## **Constructivist theories of learning**

*Adapted from Burke, K. (1999). 'How to Assess Authentic Learning'. Skylight Training and Publishing USA.*

Later learning theorists discovered that learning isolated facts and skills is more difficult without meaningful ways to organise information and make it easy to remember.

The constructivist theories believe that “learning is a constructive process in which the learner is building an internal representation of knowledge, a personal interpretation of experience”. (Bedner, et al in Burke, K.1999)

Constructivists suggest that learning is **not** linear. It does not occur on a timeline of basic skills. Instead, learning occurs at an uneven rate and in many different directions at once. The constructivists also believe that instead of learning being decontextualised, or taken out of context, it must be situated in a rich context of real world situations.

Meaningful learning does not just “happen” when students receive information. In order for learning to occur, students have to interpret information and relate it to their own prior knowledge. They need to know not only how to perform, but also when to perform and how to change the performance to fit new and different situations.

Traditional forms of evaluation such as multiple-choice tests assess recall of information. They are rarely able to assess whether or not students can organise complex problems.

Meaningful learning is constructive. Learners should be able to construct meaning for themselves, reflect on this meaning and self-assess to determine their own strengths and weaknesses.

Integrated curriculum, cooperative learning and problem-based learning are some examples of strategies that assist students construct knowledge for themselves.

Assessments relevant to this type of constructivist learning should therefore focus on students acquiring knowledge, as well as their ability to **use** skills and strategies and apply them appropriately. Recent studies show that poor thinkers and problem solvers may possess the

skills they need, but cannot use them in certain tasks. Assessment practices should stop measuring purely knowledge skills and start measuring the ability of learners to use those skills.

How are these new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment changing the way we plan, implement and evaluate our teaching in Papua New Guinea schools?

The reform curriculum is advocating change, through the development of new curriculum approaches and in turn, new ways of assessment and reporting, particularly for the primary school years.



## Activity 4

*Read the following extract from the National Curriculum Statement for Papua New Guinea 2003 outlining assessment and reporting methods for Papua New Guinea schools.*

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## The National Curriculum Statement, 2003: Assessment and Reporting

Assessment and reporting must be **culturally appropriate** for Papua New Guinea. The process of assessment and reporting in schools should be **continuous** and based on learning outcomes defined in the national subject syllabuses. The national syllabuses for all subjects identify learning outcomes that are **relevant to individuals** in their communities as well as nationally and internationally. The learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that students should achieve for each grade of schooling from Elementary to Grade 12 in all subjects. These learning outcomes are written in terms that enable them to be demonstrated, assessed or measured. The learning outcomes will:

- help teachers assess and report student's achievements in relation to the learning outcome statements;
- allow student achievement of the outcomes to be described in consistent ways;
- help teachers to monitor student learning; and
- help teachers plan their future teaching programs.

Assessment and reporting procedures should provide **systematic** and **continuous** ways of collecting information about students' learning. Up to Grade 7, assessment is school based and internal. From Grades 8 to 12, teachers use a combination of internal and external assessment. Both internal and external assessments at Elementary, Primary and Secondary should reflect students' achievement of the learning outcomes described in the syllabuses.

Assessment and reporting should be based on a **balanced** approach. This can be achieved through a variety of ways of **gathering evidence** about students' learning, using formal and informal assessment such as:

- observation of students' performance (practical assessment), processes and products;
- concept maps;
- self and peer assessment;
- portfolios; and
- written tests and examinations.

Assessment and reporting must be manageable and supported by collaborative approaches involving students, parents and guardians and when and where appropriate, members of the community. Assessment and reporting must be fair and equitable, catering for differences in gender, culture, language, religion, socio-economic status, geographic location and other special needs. Assessment and reporting must also be reliable and valid. These are more likely to be achieved when evidence is collected using a range of suitable strategies that are fair and equitable. The criteria used to assess student achievements should be made known to the students.

Evaluation involves making **value judgements** about the assessment information. The information received from assessment needs to be considered and decisions made about its significance. Once evaluated the assessment information should be reported to parents, guardians, teachers, and other stakeholders. The information should also be used:

- to inform students' choices of suitable careers and employment;
- for selection to the next level of schooling; and
- to improve teaching approaches and assessment programs.

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## Activity 5

*How does this statement reflect the changes in assessment practices as a result of changes to the curriculum? Discuss the bold words and phrases. Reflect on the type and variety of assessment when you were at primary school. What differences can you see now? Discuss with your group.*

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### ***New ways of assessing***

Many terms or phrases are used when discussing alternatives to conventional multiple choice testing. Some of these are alternative assessment, authentic assessment and performance-based assessment. All have one thing in common; they require the student to generate rather than choose a response.

Authentic assessment has been described as:

- methods that emphasise learning and thinking, especially higher order thinking skills such as problem solving strategies
- tasks that focus on student's ability to produce a quality product or performance
- disciplined inquiry that integrates and produces knowledge, rather than reproduces fragments of information others have discovered.

### **Balanced assessment**

No assessment tool by itself is capable of producing the quality information needed to make an accurate judgement of a student's performance. Teachers need to use a mix of assessment types, i.e. use standardised and teacher made **tests** to measure knowledge and content, **portfolios** to measure growth and **performance assessment** tasks to measure application. All of these tools together will provide a more accurate picture of a student's learning.

### ***Information gathering techniques***

The following techniques are used by teachers to gather information on student achievement. The collection of data or information should be ongoing throughout the term and relate to the achievement of learning objectives or outcomes. Ways of collecting data include

- observation
- anecdotal notes



- checklists
- rating scales
- questioning
- work samples
- student presentations and demonstrations
- journals
- learning logs
- diaries
- portfolios.

## Observation

Observation is the most commonly used evaluative technique. Teachers are constantly observing learning and behaviour, both in and out of the classroom, and from these observations they make evaluations. Observation is especially important in teaching young students who cannot read or write and those with special needs.

There are several tools which can be used for making systematic observations and these include anecdotal notes, checklists and rating scales.

## Anecdotal notes

An anecdotal note is a descriptive comment made by the teacher about significant student behaviour. The comment usually relates to incidental learning and learning not covered in the formal evaluation program.

Anecdotal notes might relate to:

- some aspect of a student's physical development
- an area of interest outside the formal curriculum
- interest in learning and work habits
- ability to follow instructions
- ability to participate in class activities
- relationships with others in the class.

Anecdotal notes can be organised in a number of ways:

- Use an exercise book with one page allocated for each student, or use filing cards, (one per student).
- On a class list, leave a space for notes about each student. You could aim to cover all students in a week, a fortnight, or a month. At particular times, you might just focus on one subject or one group of students.

## Activity 6

*Take some anecdotal notes on your classmates' willingness to participate in class activities.*

### Checklists

Checklists can be used by both teachers and students to monitor learning. A typical checklist contains students' names on a class list and the criteria to be evaluated. These criteria relate to learning objectives, examples, activities or behaviour. Achievement or occurrence is shown by a check such as a tick or a "yes" and non-achievement by a cross or a "no". Also, checklists often feature a space for comments about individual students and another space for a general class comment.

A writing checklist is illustrated in the following example:

Names	Recount	Poem	Narrative	Explanation	Proper noun usage	Paragraphs	Punctuation
Helen							
Mary							
Sam							
Amkat							

*Table 1: Writing checklist*

More examples of checklists can be found in Module 3.2, *Assessment and Evaluation*.

### Rating scales

A rating scale is a more refined version of a checklist. By the use of a scale, generally with up to five points on it, teachers can differentiate between degrees of performance or behaviour. Below are some typical rating scales.

**1. Numerical scale:** This is a scale shown by numbers, such as:

**1      2      3      4      5**

In a numerical scale, the lowest number represents the minimum, the highest number the maximum performance.

**2. Word/phrase/letter scale:** The same principles apply as for numerical scales. Below are some examples:

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Limited
Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

## Questioning

Questioning can be used to evaluate learning. It can help determine previous knowledge and assist in deciding on the starting point for the lesson. Questioning on an individual basis can be useful in evaluating a student's progress. It may be just a question or two about a student's understanding of a topic, or it may consist of a number of guiding questions about a particular topic or skill. It is important to be encouraging, to listen carefully to what the student has to say, and to be flexible in your questioning.

Bloom's taxonomy is a useful guide to developing higher order questions which challenges student's thinking beyond just recall and comprehension. Refer to Unit 6, *Teaching Skills* for additional information.

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### Activity 7

*Choose a topic covered to date in this unit. Develop some questions that would assess your group's understanding of the topic. Each member of the group can ask their questions to their group members.*

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## Collecting work samples

Samples of students' work collected over a period can provide a valuable database for both teacher and student. The best way to do this is to have a file for each student and add samples of work at regular intervals. The work should be dated for ready identification. The samples of work should include a range of the student's performance and may include very best work, typical in-class work or tasks that have proved to be difficult.

## Student presentations and demonstrations

From time to time, you can evaluate learning by asking students for an in-class presentation or demonstration. These could include such things as a short talk, or a role-play.

Student demonstrations might involve a process or a product. Examples may include the demonstration of a skill in physical education, showing competency in using a tool or playing an instrument. When evaluating

demonstrations, it is important that you have specific performance criteria, clear directions about requirements and a well-designed checklist or rating scale.



## Journals / learning logs / diaries

These are a means of recording learning, thoughts and feelings in written or visual form or both over time. Written journals are a means of developing writing skills, promoting higher level thinking skills and reflecting on learning.

Journals can be like diaries, or they may be a mixture of teacher and student entries. Journals are usually kept in an exercise book or loose-leaf folder. Journals can be invaluable in helping to monitor learning.

## Portfolios

A portfolio is a collection of work that has been put together over time. The major purpose is to show the development of a student's knowledge/skills/attitudes over time in relation to particular outcomes in a learning area.

The following steps may be useful in helping to plan a useful portfolio:

- Consider the background factors (what resources will I require? How will the portfolio be stored, how will instructions be given to the students?)
- Decide on the purpose of the portfolio. What is the portfolio going to be used for?
- Specify the knowledge/skills/attitudes to be demonstrated in the portfolio.
- Decide on the samples of work that will be included
- Select the evaluative techniques and recording processes
- Make decisions (what decisions need to be made on the basis of performance)

A few of these points will be considered in further detail.

### *The purpose of the portfolio*

The purpose of the portfolio could be to:

- document achievement of selected objectives / outcomes
- connect a number of subject areas to provide an "integrated" assessment of the student
- record a student's growth and development over extended periods, i.e. a semester, a year, a cluster of grades
- record the key concepts taught by teachers.

### *Types of portfolio*

After deciding the purpose for the portfolio, teachers must select the type of portfolio which would best suit the purpose. Some types of portfolio include:

- **writing** - dated writing samples to show process and product
- **process folios** - first and second drafts of assignments along with final product to show growth
- **literacy** - combination of reading, writing, speaking and listening pieces

- **best work** - student and teacher selections of the student's best work
- **integrated unit** - one unit of study
- **year-long** - key artefacts from entire year to show growth and development.

### *What will go into the portfolio?*

There are three major questions to ask when deciding on selection of items for the portfolio.

- **Who** should select the items that go into the final portfolio?
- **What** items should be selected?
- **When** should these items be selected?

Both teachers and students should select the items to be included in the portfolio.

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
1. <i>Teacher choice</i>	<i>to meet course objectives</i>
2. <i>Teacher choice</i>	_____
3. <i>Teacher choice</i>	
4. <i>Student choice</i>	<i>to allow for individual</i>
5. <i>Student choice</i>	_____ <i>choice and show best work</i>
6. <i>Student choice</i>	
7. <i>Reflection</i>	_____ <i>to encourage self-evaluation</i>
8. <i>Self -assessment</i>	
9. <i>Goal setting</i>	

### *What to select?*

Fewer items are preferable to more. A few good pieces will provide more opportunities for in-depth discussion and more targeted analysis. Seven to twelve items is a manageable number. Not just "best work" or final drafts should be kept. The evidence needs to reflect both strengths and weaknesses. It should include examples where difficulties are evident, and those that show the process towards the final product.

### *When to select?*

A timeline is important to make sure that items are collected at important times of the school year, eg, the beginning, middle and end of the year, or at the end of each term.

Some students have ‘working portfolios’ where a lot of work is kept for a time, then at the end of a unit of work, or a few weeks, or a term, a few pieces are selected for permanent addition to the final portfolio.

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## Activity 8

*Start your own portfolio of assessment examples and techniques you see used in schools and at college. Collect examples where possible, i.e. tests, work samples, checklists used by teacher etc.*

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### Peer assessment

Peer assessment involves students making judgements about other student’s work. This takes time to develop effectively in the classroom. The students should be old enough to make reasonable judgements about each other’s work. Student peer assessment also requires quite a deal of modelling and assistance from the teacher. It should be used for formative types of assessment, not summative.

### Student self evaluation

Student self-evaluation should be encouraged by all teachers, because it promotes the responsibility for setting of goals and evaluating the success or otherwise of the goals.

Self-evaluation helps students assess their strengths and weaknesses and makes them more aware of better performance.

### Graphic organisers

*Adapted from: Burke, K. (1999). 'How to Assess Authentic Learning'. Skylight Training and Publishing.*

Graphic organisers are maps that represent student thinking. They are mental maps that represent key skills like sequencing, comparing and contrasting, classifying and involve students in active thinking.

Graphic organisers are effective tools for helping both teachers and students graphically display their thinking processes. They also help to:

- represent abstract or implicit information in a more concrete form
- depict relationships between facts and concepts
- generate and organise ideas for writing
- relate new information to prior knowledge
- store and retrieve information
- assess student thinking and learning.

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 **Activity 9**

*Think about your use of diagrams and visual representations to organise your thinking. Discuss with your group when you might use diagrams and pictures to assist in your learning. Had you thought of using these for assessment?*

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*Why should we use graphic organisers?*

Many students cannot connect or relate new information to prior knowledge because they have trouble remembering things. Graphic organisers can help them remember because they become ‘blueprints’ or maps to make abstract ideas more visible.

Students who are visual learners need graphic organisers to help them organise information and remember key concepts.

Look carefully at the following examples of different types of graphic organisers.

### VENN DIAGRAM

Bandicoot
Tree kangaroo

Different    Alike    Different

Complete the diagram listing what you know about the similarities and differences between these animals.

*Note: Items listed on a Venn diagram should be parallel.*

### MIND MAP

### AGREE/DISAGREE CHART

SUBJECT: Health/Physical Education  
 TOPIC: AIDS in PNG

STATEMENT	Before		After	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
1. AIDS is a social problem				
2. AIDS can be spread in many ways				
3. More men than women have AIDS				
4. The PNG AIDS campaign is making a difference				

### THINKING AT RIGHT ANGLES

SUBJECT: Law and Order  
 DIRECTIONS: Complete this chart by listing the facts in Section A and your feelings in Section B.

Topic: Law and Order in PNG

}

Section A (FACTS)

Section B (FEELINGS OR ASSOCIATIONS)

### *How can we assess using graphic organisers?*

Teachers often use graphic organisers to introduce topics, students use them to study, and students sometimes use them to present important information to other group members.

Another use for graphic organisers is using them as an assessment tool to see what students have learnt.

- Ask students to select a graphic organiser to take the place of an essay. Use the right angle thinking model to list the facts on the right and feelings and associations about the topic on the bottom.
- Ask students to use a Venn diagram model to compare two areas which have things in common, and things which are different.
- Include graphic organisers on quizzes and tests.
- Ask groups of students to complete the graphic organiser on butchers paper. Give the group a grade for the final graphic organiser and oral presentation.
- Require students to use a graphic organiser in a project or oral presentation.
- Create a picture graphic organiser that includes outlines of objects rather than circles or lines.
- Ask the students in groups to invent an original graphic organiser. Grade the assignment on the basis of originality, creativity, usefulness, and logic.



## **Activity 10**

*Design an assessment task using a graphic organiser.*

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## Performance tasks and rubrics

### *What are performance tasks?*

Performance tasks are more than activities that teachers assign students. They cover many skills and usually have a direct application to real tasks people are asked to do in everyday life.

A performance task should have the following characteristics:

- students have some choice in selecting the task
- the task requires both the elaboration of core knowledge content and the use of specific processes
- the task has an explicit scoring system
- the task is designed for an audience larger than the teacher, that is, others outside the classroom would find value in the work
- the task is carefully designed to measure what it is supposed to measure.

### *Types of performance tasks*

**Restricted** performance tasks refer to tasks that tend to be highly structured to fit a specific instructional objective or outcome, (eg read aloud a piece of poetry).

**Extended** performance tasks refer to tasks that are so comprehensive, numerous instructional objectives are involved. These tasks tend to be less structured and broad in scope. An example of such a task would be to 'develop a plan for banning the sale of loose cigarettes at the tuckshops and road side markets.' This project may include a) a presentation; b) a brochure; c) a letter to the local newspaper d) a survey of opinions.

An extended performance task could be made up of several smaller tasks than can be assessed separately, but they are all part of a bigger task that involves initial and creative problem solving.

The key characteristic of performance tasks involves using real life applications to real life problems. By demonstrating what they can do, students have a greater probability of transferring the skills they learned to life rather than just reproducing knowledge for a test.

Look the example of a performance task that follows.

## PERFORMANCE TASK

### *Design a Travel Brochure*



#### **Outcomes:**

- *Demonstrate competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process*
- *Gather and use information for research purposes*
- *Write for an intended purpose (to describe, explain, to market). Write for an intended audience (tourists)*

#### **Travel Brochure for your Province / City**

*You work for the PNG Tourism and Promotion Authority. Your task is to design an attractive and informative brochure to attract tourists to your province / city. You must include the following information*

- *An attractive cover*
- *General information about the province, (location, features, population, weather information, etc)*
- *Major attractions (what would tourists be interested in doing in your province / city?)*
- *Accommodation information*
- *Testimonials from visitors (what past visitors have written or said about their stay in your province)*

#### **Assessment of Brochure**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Cover</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>2 colours No graphics</i>	<i>2 colours Graphics</i>	<i>3 colours or more Graphics</i>
<i>General Information</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Very little information. Poorly written</i>	<i>Adequate information, (includes all four requirements) Satisfactorily written.</i>	<i>Detailed information. Well written</i>
<i>Major attractions</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>1-2 attractions Poor descriptions</i>	<i>3-4 attractions Adequate descriptions</i>	<i>More than 4 attractions. Vivid descriptions</i>
<i>Accommodation / Travel Information</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Accommodation only</i>	<i>Accommodation Travel information</i>	<i>Accommodation Travel Dining</i>
<i>Testimonials</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>1 quote Not persuasive / interesting</i>	<i>2 quotes Motivating</i>	<i>2 or more quotes Famous people</i>

### *Developing criteria for performance assessment*

Once the performance task is designed, the next step involves developing the criteria to determine the adequacy of the student's performance.

Criteria are often referred to as rubrics, scoring guidelines or scoring dimensions.

**Rubrics** are a set of guidelines for distinguishing between performances or products of different quality. They should be based on the results of stated performance standards and be composed of scaled levels that describe progress towards the result. An example of a rubric is included in the performance task of designing a brochure.

Different types of scales can be used for assessing different types of learning.

<b>Types of Scales</b>				
<b>Numerical Scales</b>				
0	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	5
<b>A Numerical Scale with Verbal Descriptors</b>				
1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent	Superior
<b>Verbal Descriptors</b>				
Tasks not completed		Task partially completed	Task completed	

Table 2: Rubric Scales

### *Performance tasks in the classroom*

Performance tasks do provide an alternative to paper-and-pencil tests, and they are often more authentic, that is, reflective of the types of tasks students will be asked to do in the real world. Try them out in your classroom.

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## **Activity 11**

*With your group, design a performance task for mathematics using a newspaper. You could use information in the advertisements (cars, supermarket etc), the television guide, the weather map, sports statistics and information to name a few. Decide on what mathematical objectives you are trying to achieve, then use the newspaper information as the basis of your task. If you wish, design a performance rubric for your task.*

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## Interviews and conferences

### *What are interviews and conferences?*

Teachers can gather valuable information about student achievement by talking with students. Primary teachers are more likely to use direct communication as an assessment tool, particularly with younger students, than high school teachers.

When teachers talk with and listen to students, they can gather information that sometimes cannot be gathered any other way. When talking with and listening to students, teachers can:

1. Help clarify thinking
2. Assist children to think about their own learning
3. Help achieve new levels of understanding
4. Make children feel their ideas and opinions are valued
5. Respond to children's comments
6. Build positive teacher-child relationships

In interviews, conferences and conversations, students get the opportunity to clarify their thinking and respond to others. Talking about what has been done and what is planned to be done is very important in developing self-evaluation skills.

Asking higher order questions that assess a student's thoughts or feelings are more valuable than short answer recall questions. Some good starters would be

1. How did you feel about...
2. In your opinion, why is it important to...
3. What are you learning?
4. What do you need more help with?

Interviews and conferences can be done individually or in groups. Students can take part in peer conferences with some guiding questions to keep them focused on key points.



### **Activity 12**

*Discuss in your group when you might use a conference or student interview in your classroom.*

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## **Selecting the right type of assessment techniques**

Teachers use their professional judgement in deciding which types of assessment techniques are used in their classroom. Tests are one way to collect information on student achievement, but they should be used as part of a balanced assessment program.

Different subjects may require different assessment techniques and teachers need to think about which data gathering methods are more suitable to use, and for what purpose the information is being gathered. Observation as an assessment technique is often used extensively with young children, whilst analysis of work samples or self-assessment may be used more with older students.

The following section describes assessment in the context of a bridging class. As you read, think about the types of assessment being discussed, and why these particular data gathering techniques were used.

## ***Assessing children's literacy learning in the bridging classes***

*Adapted from PASTEP (2000). 'Vernacular to English Bridging Strategies Training Program.' Facilitator's Manual.*

Children coming into Grade 3 will bring with them different experiences and varying levels of language development from elementary school. Whilst most will have the basic literary skills in the vernacular, and an introduction to speaking in English, there will be some who do not read and write well in their vernacular and may not be able to speak in English.

It is important for teachers to assess the progress children have made in learning to read and write in vernacular. It is also important to assess children's oral and written understanding of simple English.

Assessment involves giving children simple activities and observing their responses. What is learned from these observations should be linked to the teaching program.

### ***Monitoring children's activity***

Much of what a teacher learns about a child's English literacy development will be based on observation and monitoring. This means:

- watching what children do
- listening to children talk
- collecting and evaluating samples of children's drawing and writing
- observing and listening to children while they read charts, labels, shared books and readers.

### ***Watching what children do***

Teachers can watch children as they participate in whole class, small group, pair and individual activities in the different subject areas. When watching children, teachers can look for:

- Which language/s do children choose to use?
- In which situations do children choose to use different languages?
- Are the children confident with the topic and activities?
- Do they understand classroom instructions and routines?
- Do they interact well with each other?
- What kinds of strategies do they use to complete a task eg, do they look at wall charts to help spell words, or do they repeat new words to themselves?

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 **Activity 13**

*Read the following case study from a lower primary teacher's journal. The children had written first drafts of their stories several days previously. Now the teacher has returned the drafts and the children are editing and publishing their final copies. The teacher is moving around assisting individual children and asking others to read their stories to her.*

*Journal entry*

I handed back their papers and asked them to read their stories to me. Elijah read his story but when it was Dana's turn, she was confused. She couldn't say a word. Perhaps she forgot everything over the holiday. I told her to listen while I read her the story. When I finished, I asked her to read the story back to me. Her story had two sentences. She read the first sentence but couldn't read the second one, so I asked her 'What did the two children see in the bush?' 'Tupela lukim wanpela baby karai istap long diwai,' she answered. Since her answer was in pidgin, I translated it to English. I said 'They saw a baby crying in the tree'. Then I asked her to repeat after me and then I told her that what she had said was the next sentence. I asked her to read the story again and this time she read it correctly. When I later went back to Dana and found out that she had finished copying her story which I had written on a piece of paper. Elijah was busy reading his story over again and putting fullstops where necessary. His story was long and interesting but there weren't many fullstops. His story was a continuous one.

*Discuss and answer the following questions*

- *The teacher has focused on Elijah and Dana. Can you see where she has made observations as a result of watching the children? Underline the observations.*
- *How is the teacher able to help Dana because of her observations?*

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*Listening to children talk*

*From PASTEP (2000) Vernacular to English Bridging Strategies Training Program. Facilitator's Manual*

It is important to provide opportunities for children to talk about what they have done, what they are doing, as well as while they are doing things. Providing activities that encourage children to talk in English, like labelling a picture or performing different actions, creates opportunities for teachers to monitor what children say and how they say it.

In the early stages, children's use of English will be limited to a few words and phrases.

Rather than trying to listen to every child at any one time, teachers will find it easier to choose a group of children to monitor each week and record some responses. For example, a group of children might be asked to describe a picture, the teacher can listen and note down a sample of each child's speech. Children's talk can be assessed when they answer questions, or when they tell or retell a story, or explain a picture or describe an action in their own words.

The example below shows how a teacher used a grid to record observations of a discussion in English about what the students did on the weekend.

NAME:	Recounts personal events	Repeats or restates words not understood by listener	Uses patterns such as 'On Saturday' ..'Last night'	Speaks clearly and confidently
Kalal	☺	☹	☺	☺
Nava	☺	☺	☺	☺
Lucy	☺	☺	☹ uses 'and' repeatedly	☺
Forova	☹ names and actions only not yet able to link ideas	☺ repeats words for listener	☹ uses 'and then' as learned pattern	☹

Table 3: Anecdotal notes

### *Evaluating samples of children's writing*

Children will need to be given the opportunity to do different kinds of writing in English. Most children will begin by labelling objects, people and places. They will also do a lot of copying from the board. They will copy the date, teacher's notes and spelling words. Copying is a language transition strategy that gives children practice in using English words and sentences modelled by the teacher. It is important that children are able to imitate good writing models.

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## Activity 14

*Look closely at the following samples of students' writing. Analyse each one and write down what you can observe about each student's writing ability. What writing skills are demonstrated?*

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## Student work samples

Day Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> 2- 2001 Andrew

One day I and my father  
went hunting in the big bush.  
I and my freinds went to  
the garder.

My Holiday By Andrew

PLES

Wanpela taim mipela i go long ples blong  
Mipela blong ma blo wataim ol anti  
Na ol kasen bilong mipela.

By PENINA

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001  
Port Moseby

During my Holiday my Father and  
I went to Port Moseby. to see  
Auncle. I enjoyen my Holidays  
there.

### *Observing and listening to children while they read charts, labels, shared books and readers*

- In reading, children are taught to use pictures as hints or clues to the meaning of sentences. Teachers can observe to see if children look at the pictures when they are unsure of a word or sentence.
- When trying to decode a new word, children would have been taught to ‘sound out’ the word by saying its letter sounds. Teachers can observe to see if children are using this strategy to help them decode new words.
- Children using the strategy of self-correcting their mistakes is another strategy that teachers should monitor. Where children are not able to identify or self correct mistakes they will need to be taught the word or phrase again.
- Teachers should also monitor how often children seek assistance either from the teacher or from other children. Asking for help is another important strategy that children should learn.
- All of these strategies will need to be taught to children and monitored by teachers.

### The transition to English continuum

The reform curriculum is based upon student centred approaches, where teachers plan, implement and evaluate learning based upon the needs and abilities of their class members. In any class there will be a range of ages and abilities which the teacher must recognise and cater for.

The same applies with students moving from the elementary to the primary classroom. Not all children will know and be doing the same things at the same time. Individual children may be at different points of language learning when they arrive in Grade 3. Children will be somewhere along the path or ‘continuum’ of language learning and it is useful for teachers to have a way of determining where a particular student is located on the path.

The use of a continuum helps teachers to identify what children can do when they enter their class. The Transition to English Continuum (PASTEP 2000, Vernacular to English Bridging Strategies Training Program) can help teachers identify what a child can do when they enter Grade 3 and what most children should be expected to do by the end of Grade 3.

The continuum is divided into four stages:

- from Elementary
- early Grade 3
- later Grade 3, and
- early Grade 4.

This continuum is a **guide only**, to help place students at particular points in literacy learning, and to allow the teacher to work as closely as possible to these points.

The continuum can be used as a checklist to help teachers identify what children can do when they enter Grade 3.

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 **Activity 15**

*Read the Transition to English continuum on the following pages.*

- *Using the Writing continuum, determine where you would place each of the students based on the writing samples used in the previous activity.*
- *If possible, visit a Grade 3 classroom and hear a student read. Use the reading continuum to place the student based on your observations.*

*(Remember, this is a practice. You would need more than one piece of evidence to determine where the student would be placed on the continuum)*

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**Beginning transition to English continuum/checklist** (PASTEP 2000, Vernacular to English Bridging Strategies Training Program.)

	From Elementary	Early Grade 3	Later grade 3	Early grade 4
<b>Oral language</b>	<p>Communicates in vernacular for different purposes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Retells stories with some detail</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recount events in sequence</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talks and listens in whole class and small group activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participates in classroom routines</li> </ul> <p>Communicates in English in some classroom routines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Joins in rhymes and songs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follows simple instructions.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Distinguishes spoken English from vernacular</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Knows the letters of the English alphabet and most of their sounds</li> </ul>	<p>Communicates in spoken English in classroom routines and highly structured situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses one word labels usually nouns or verbs connected with classroom themes, topics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses well-practised ‘chunks’ of language eg chants, repetitive structures from big books</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May respond in vernacular</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May choose to participate non-verbally in English activities, that is to watch, listen and do rather than say</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begins to recognise differences in sounds between English and vernacular</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Takes risks in saying new English words</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses letter-sound knowledge of vernacular to attempt pronunciation of new English words</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Practises English by copying, repeating, memorising</li> </ul> <p><i>Continues to use vernacular to communicate in most classroom and playground activities.</i></p>	<p>Communicates in spoken English in controlled classroom situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Listens to short stories using known content</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follows instructions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Retells a short story about known topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Speaks with acceptable pronunciation of English sounds and speech patterns</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talks about familiar things in English after talking about them in vernacular</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Becoming aware of separate uses for vernacular and English</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recalls and says words with a given letter in the beginning, middle and end positions in words</li> </ul> <p><i>Communicates in vernacular in classroom activities such as discussions, role-plays about familiar ideas and information.</i></p>	<p>Communicates in spoken English in a wider range of classroom situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tells a short story based on personal experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Understands simple teacher explanations when supported by pictures, familiar vocabulary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talks with other children in group activities related the theme/topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses English with varying degrees of grammatical accuracy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Extends understandings of differences between vernacular and English eg ways of telling stories, word meanings, dialects of vernacular</li> </ul> <p><i>Communicates in vernacular in a variety of classroom situations demanding more detail and problem solving.</i></p>
<b>Reading</b>	<p>Reads familiar texts in vernacular confidently, using pictures and words as clues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Joins in shared reading</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Takes part in ‘silent’ reading activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Knows how to hold books, turn</li> </ul>	<p>New to reading in English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Joins in shared reading</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Makes predictions in vernacular and begins to understand English in shared reading</li> </ul>	<p><i>Begins to recognise familiar words and short word clusters from memory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reads short known stories and factual texts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shows comprehension (eg of characters and events)through drawing, story maps, sequencing pictures using limited English</li> </ul>	<p><i>Begins to comprehend short familiar texts in English with contextual support</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Selects and reads story and factual genres on familiar topics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reads own stories to teacher and other children</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reads and retells events from short familiar texts</li> </ul>

	From Elementary	Early Grade 3	Later grade 3	Early grade 4
	<p>pages, looks carefully at pictures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Works out meanings of words in context</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reads new words by ‘sounding out’</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Names the characters and events in a story</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recognises own name or part of it in print</li> </ul> <p><i>Beginning to develop reading skills in English</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reads community texts eg Milo, OMO</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participates in reading English translations of known vernacular texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can ‘read’ familiar English texts from memory and using picture clues</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can recognise words and short word clusters on well known topics in English eg on wall charts, word lists, in big books.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Knows English alphabet letter-sound relationships</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses nouns (particularly) and verbs to understand pictures and writing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reads quietly for pleasure</li> </ul> <p><i>Continues to read texts in vernacular for different purposes.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reads familiar stories in vernacular and English (diglot)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Beginning to understand meanings of words such as <i>the, and, is.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reorders jumbled sentences</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses some phonic skills to decode (initial sounds, blends)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reads some English sound patterns eg <i>-ing in reading, writing, -st in station, stop</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses dictionaries, word charts to work out meanings of new words</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reads to another child</li> </ul> <p><i>Reads a range of story and information texts in vernacular containing some unfamiliar ideas.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Names the main idea in a short text</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Compares characters and events in simple stories</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begins to use a range of reading skills i.e. prediction, decoding, sight vocabulary.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Blends letters and letter clusters to make new words eg l-ight, br-ight</li> </ul> <p><i>Beginning to explore critical and interpretive reading of vernacular texts.</i></p>
Writing	<p><i>Writes short texts in TP about familiar topics, beginning to see different purposes for writing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writes stories about personal experiences and observations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writes recounts, instructions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rewrites village stories in own words</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Checks and makes corrections to own writing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses basic punctuation marks eg full stops, capital letters, question marks.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Writes simple English messages for classroom purposes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May write texts which contain vernacular and English words</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Understands writing conventions such as direction, page layout, word spacing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Copies sentences, captions, short texts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writes labels for pictures</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May choose to use vernacular</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writes words using letters of key sounds heard eg pg for pig</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses vernacular to help spell English words</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writes neatly</li> </ul>	<p><i>Writes short English texts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Takes part in negotiated writing eg writing wall stories, big books</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writes short texts that show simple structure eg beginning middle end, steps</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses basic punctuation marks eg full stops, capital letters, question marks.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writes texts closely related to spoken English</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses known English patterns in writing eg <i>Last night...., in the house</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses wall charts and word lists to assist spelling</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses invented spelling</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spells words on basis of English pronunciation</li> </ul>	<p><i>Writes short English texts for different purposes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writes simple descriptions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writes simple recounts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begins to use connectors eg <i>but and</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writes texts reflecting oral English skills i.e. will be varying degrees of grammatical accuracy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses several related ideas around a theme or topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses pronoun references with some noun-pronoun agreement eg <i>Rose went to town. She..</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses punctuation to separate ideas eg paragraphs, full stops.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spells words using sound and visual features eg gril for girl</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Edits and publishes own work</li> </ul>

	From Elementary	Early Grade 3	Later grade 3	Early grade 4
		<i>Continues to write in vernacular for a range of purposes.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses English to vernacular dictionary <input type="checkbox"/> Checks own work  <i>Writes independently and creatively in vernacular in a range of forms at an acceptable level of accuracy.</i>	<i>Writes independently and creatively in vernacular an increasing range of forms requiring more detail and elaboration.</i>

Further assistance with developing checklists is available in the Lower Primary Language Syllabus and the Lower Primary Language Resource Book

## ***Tests and testing***

### **Teacher-made tests**

*Adapted from Burke, K. (1999). 'How to Assess Authentic Learning' Skylight Training and Publishing, USA.*

Teacher made tests are written or oral assessments that are not commercially produced or standardised. These types of tests are designed specifically for a teacher's own students.

Testing can be defined as any kind of school activity that results in some type of mark or comment being entered in a grade book, on a checklist etc. The term 'test' refers to a more structured oral or written evaluation of student achievement. Examinations are tests scheduled by the school, tend to cover more of the curriculum and often count more than other forms of evaluation.

Teacher made tests can be in a number of formats including matching items, fill- the – blank items, true-false questions, or essays.

Teacher made tests can be important parts of the teaching and learning process if they are integrated into daily classroom teaching and are constructed as part of the learning process, not just given at the end of a unit of work.

Constructing a good teacher made test is very time consuming and difficult. One of the common problems with teacher made tests is their emphasis on lower level thinking. They also often emphasis verbal-linguistic intelligence, which puts poor readers at a disadvantage, no matter how much content they may know. Many teachers may not have received instruction or practice in constructing problem solving situations on tests to measure the application of skills and higher-order thinking.

### **Why do teachers make tests?**

Teacher made tests provide information that helps teachers to make decisions about future planning. Teachers can make changes immediately to meet the needs of their students. The teacher made test gives the teacher the feedback on the current understandings of the teaching programs being delivered in the classroom.

The most important thing teachers should do when developing teacher made tests is make them part of the assessment – not separate from it. Tests should be on-going and instructional. They should be more “before the fact” to target essential learning, not “after the fact” to find out what students didn't learn.

When developing tests, teachers should make adjustments on their tests for the various learning styles of the students in their class. It would not be possible to address every student's needs on each test, but tests should try to motivate students to learn, provide choices and make allowances for individual differences.

The table below shows the characteristics of different types of learners.

<b>Types of Learners</b>		
<b>Visual Learners</b>	<b>Auditory Learners</b>	<b>Kinaesthetic Learners</b>
Mind sometimes strays during verbal activities	Talks to self	In motion most of the time
Organised in approach to tasks	Easily distracted	Reading is not a priority
Likes to read	Has difficulty with written directions	Poor speller
Usually a good speller	Likes to be read to	Likes to solve problems by physically walking through them
Memorises by seeing graphics and pictures	Memorises by steps in a sequence	Enjoys handling objects
Finds verbal instructions difficult	Enjoys listening activities	Enjoys doing activities

Table 4: Types of learners. From Burke, K. (1999). 'How to Assess Authentic Learning'.

Teachers who include strategies and tools such as graphic organisers, student choice and opportunities for oral answers are attempting to meet the different learning needs of their students.

Teacher made tests can be constructed to meet the needs of most students by providing many opportunities to measure what students can do instead of just measuring their ability to read, write and complete test papers.

The following points will help ensure test success for all students, especially those with special needs which are most at risk of failing tests:

- read instructions orally
- rephrase oral instructions if necessary
- ask students to repeat directions to make sure they understand
- monitor carefully to make sure all students understand directions for the test
- provide alternative evaluations – oral testing, dictation etc
- provide a clock so students can monitor themselves
- give examples of each type of question (oral and written)
- leave enough space for answers
- use visual demonstrations
- do not crowd or clutter the test
- give choices
- go from concrete to abstract
- don't deduct for spelling and grammar on tests if that is not what you are testing.
- provide manipulative experiences whenever possible
- allow students to use notes and textbooks sometimes (open book tests)

- include visuals like graphic organisers on tests.
- give specific point values for each group of questions
- list criteria for essay questions
- provide immediate feedback on all tests.

## Guidelines for teacher-made tests

The following guidelines from Burke (1999) may help in constructing better teacher-made tests.

- Create the test before beginning the unit
- Make sure the test is correlated to the unit objectives
- Give clear directions for each section of the text
- Arrange the questions from simple to complex
- Give point values to each section
- Vary the question types (true/false, fill in the blank, multiple choice, essay, matching)
- Group question types together
- Type or print clearly. (Leave space between questions to facilitate easy reading and writing)
- Include a variety of visual, oral and kinaesthetic tasks
- Make allowances for students with special needs
- Give students some choice in the questions they select (eg a choice of graphic organisers or essay questions)
- Vary levels of questions by using verbs to cover gathering, processing and application questions
- Provide a grading scale so students know what score constitutes a certain grade (A = 93 – 100, B= 85- 92, etc)
- Give sufficient time for all students to finish. The teacher should be able to work through the test in one-third to one half the time given to students.

<b>TIPS FOR CONSTRUCTING TEST QUESTIONS</b>
<p><b>True –False items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Avoid absolute words like “all”, “never”, and “always”</i></li> <li>• <i>Make sure items are clearly true or false rather than ambiguous</i></li> <li>• <i>Consider asking students to make false questions true to encourage higher order thinking</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Matching Items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Limit list to between five and ten items</i></li> <li>• <i>Use homogeneous lists. (Don’t mix names with dates)</i></li> <li>• <i>Give clear instructions. (Write letter, number, etc)</i></li> <li>• <i>Give more choices than there are questions</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Multiple-choice items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>State main idea in the core or stem of the question</i></li> <li>• <i>Use reasonably incorrect choices (Avoid ridiculous choices)</i></li> <li>• <i>Make options the same length (nothing very long or very short)</i></li> <li>• <i>Include multiple correct answers (a and b, all of the above)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Completion items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Structure for a brief, specific answer for each item</i></li> <li>• <i>Avoid passages taken directly from the text</i></li> <li>• <i>Use blanks of equal length</i></li> <li>• <i>Avoid multiple blanks that sometimes make a sentence too confusing</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Essay items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Avoid questions that are too broad and all encompassing. (Discuss all you know ...)</i></li> <li>• <i>Define criteria for evaluation</i></li> <li>• <i>Give point value</i></li> <li>• <i>Use some higher order thinking verbs like “predict” or “compare and contrast” rather than verbs like “list” and “name”</i></li> </ul>

Table 5: Tips for constructing test questions.

Essays, graphic organisers and oral performances all measure meaningful learning and can all be included on teacher made tests, but because of time constraints, teachers often choose objective- style questions.

## Objective style questions

These type of test items include:

- multiple choice
- true-false

- matching
- short response

Teachers need to be careful when using objective style questions because often they only require recall of facts and do not allow the student to display thinking processes or the teacher to observe them.

Teachers should look at the advantages and disadvantages of objective-style tests and then determine the role they will play in the evaluation process.

<b>OBJECTIVE TYPES OF EVALUATION</b> <i>A well-developed objective test...</i>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Can evaluate skills quickly and efficiently</i></li> <li>• <i>Can prevent students from “writing around” the answer</i></li> <li>• <i>Can prevent students’ grades from being influenced by writing skills, spelling, grammar, and neatness</i></li> <li>• <i>Can be easily analysed (item analysis)</i></li> <li>• <i>Prevents biased grading by teacher</i></li> <li>• <i>Can be used for diagnostic or pre-test purposes</i></li> <li>• <i>Can be given to large groups</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Requires mostly recall of facts</i></li> <li>• <i>Does not allow students to demonstrate writing skills</i></li> <li>• <i>Often requires a disproportionate amount of reading (penalises poor readers)</i></li> <li>• <i>Can be ambiguous and confusing (especially to younger students)</i></li> <li>• <i>Usually has a specific, pre-determined answer</i></li> <li>• <i>Can be very time consuming to construct</i></li> <li>• <i>Promotes guessing</i></li> <li>• <i>Is often used year after year despite differing needs of students</i></li> </ul>

Table 6: Objective evaluation

## Questioning techniques and 'Three-Story Intellect' verbs

Bellanca and Fogarty (1991, in Burke, 1999) created a graphic based on Bloom’s Taxonomy called the Three-Story Intellect to show what verbs teachers can use when they ask questions.

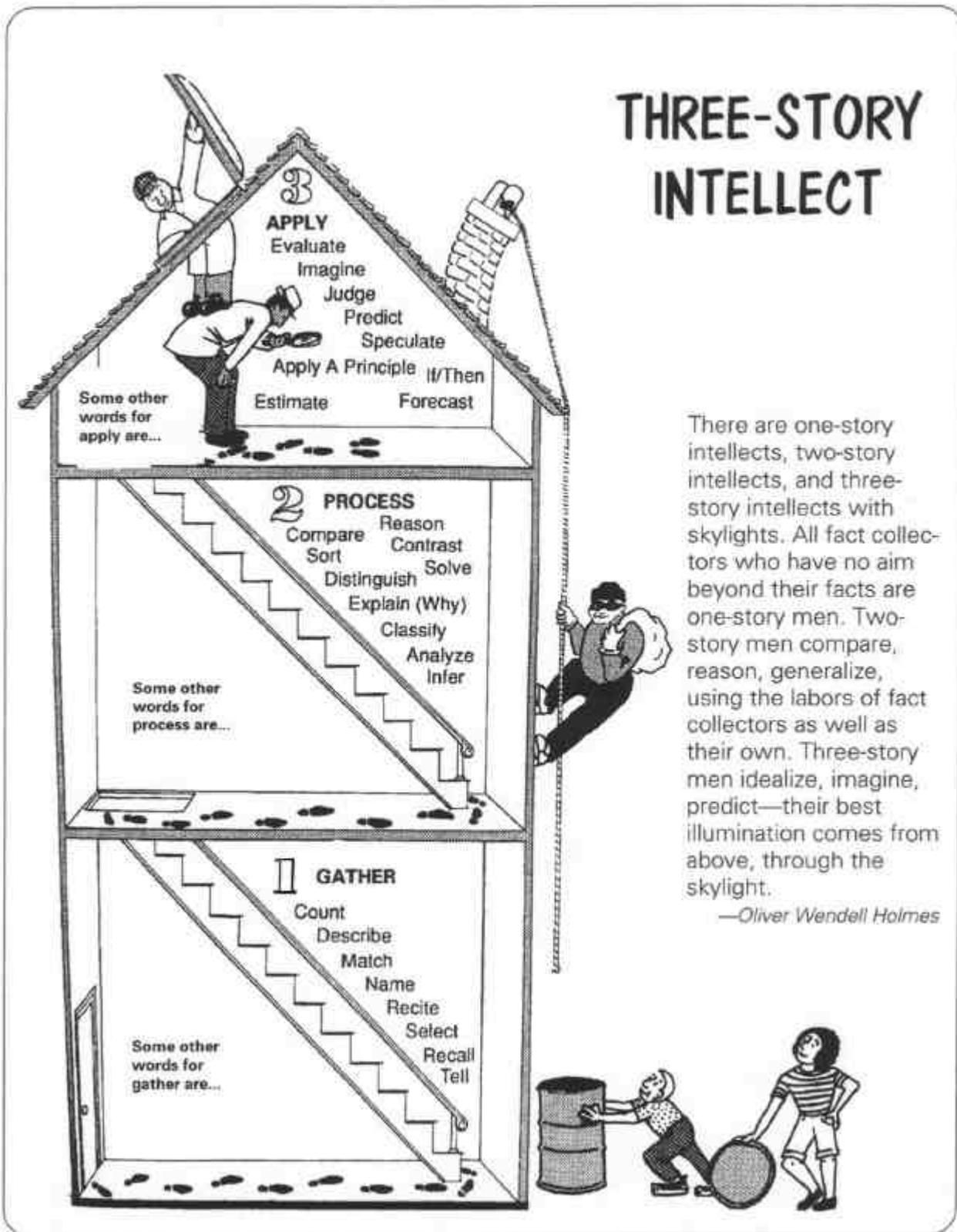
First –story verbs like “count”, “describe,” and “match” ask students to gather or **recall** information.

Second-story verbs like “reason,” “compare”, and “analyse” ask students to **process** information.

Third-story verbs like “evaluate”, “imagine” and “speculate” ask students to **apply** information.

An effective teacher made test includes verbs from all three stories of the intellect. Teachers can use this guide when asking questions in class and when creating teacher-made tests that encourage higher-order thinking.

# THREE-STORY INTELLECT



Adapted from Bellanca and Fogarty, 1991.

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 **Activity 16**

- *Your lecturer will provide you with an example of an old test paper. Classify the questions as first, second or third level intellect questions. Tally the results. Comment on your findings*
  - *Design a test for a topic in this unit that you have been studying. Make sure you include questions from all three intellects and take account of good teacher test design studied in this topic.*
- 
- 

## Standardised tests

Standardised tests are tests that are standardised in four areas:

1. Format. The format of all the questions for all the students is the same.
2. Questions. All the questions for all the students are the same.
3. Instructions. All the instructions for all the students are the same
4. Time allotment. The time permitted to complete the test for all the students is the same.

Standardised tests can be **norm referenced** or **criterion referenced**.

Norm referenced interpretation of a test is a relative ranking of a student among other students. (For example, 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in a class of 35 students.) Criterion referenced interpretation is a description of the specific knowledge and skills each student can demonstrate.

## Norm referenced tests

With a norm-referenced test, educators interpret a student's performance in relation to the norm group – the performance of students who have previously taken the examination. Norm referenced interpretations are **relative** interpretations of performance because they focus upon how a student performed in relation to the performance of other students.

In nationally used tests, the most common norm is a national norm constructed by testing children all over the country. A norm-referenced test gives scores in relation to the norm, the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. Test publishers determine the norm by trying out test questions to see if test items “behave properly”. This means that 50% of students get the item wrong. Some easier and some more difficult items will be used, but most will cluster around the 40% to 60% correct range. If on average fifty percent of the test takers get it right and fifty per cent get it wrong, you will end up with a test that distributes scores in a normal, bell-shaped curve.

In order to make sure the test item behaves ‘properly’, the test makers must create ‘distracters’ or wrong answers presented in multiple-choice questions to trick students into choosing the wrong answer.

## Criterion referenced tests

A criterion-referenced test scores performance in relation to a clearly specified set of behaviours.

Instead of a norm-referenced interpretation such as the student scored better than 85% of the students in the norm group, a criterion-referenced interpretation could be the student mastered 85% of the test's content. A criterion-referenced interpretation does not depend on how other students performed on the test.

## The Grade 6 and Grade 8 examinations

1. From 2001, the Grade 6 examination is not compulsory for schools.
2. The Grade 8 examination is used to select students to continue into secondary school.
3. The Grade 8 examination does not tell teachers very much about the learning needs of that group of students or the learning that has taken place in the classroom.

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### Activity 17

- *What types of information can national testing provide?*
  - *How relevant would national assessment information be to your classroom?*
  - *How can national trends inform a teacher's practice in the classroom?*
- 

## Dealing with assessment in PNG schools

Assessment policies in primary schools are changing as a result of the reform curriculum and a change in focus to relevant, student centred approaches which meet the needs of individuals.

This topic explains assessment requirements that have been in use in Papua New Guinea primary schools for a number of years. It will take some time for schools to adopt new ways of assessing and reporting. This information is included so you will be aware of these assessment practices should you come across them, either as a student teacher, or when you take up your appointment as a staff member in a primary school.

New assessment policies have been developed and in time will be taken up by schools.

*The following information is taken from the Madang Teachers' College Professional Development strand unit, **Assessment and Evaluation**.*

Schools have their own assessment policies which serves as guide to dealing with students assessment. However, they have one common thing and that is after testing and interpreting students score they are entered into the SAPS and the SASS for report writing and record keeping.

**Subject Assessment Period Sheet (SAPS) and the Subject Assessment Summary Sheet (SASS)**

SAPS - is a students' assessment record for a subject for each assessment period. The SAPS shows the scores for tests administered during an assessment period.

<b>SUBJECT ASSESSMENT PERIOD SHEET</b>													
		<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>GRADE</b>							<b>ASS PERIOD</b>		
2001		MATHEMATICS	SAGALAU PS	8							4		
<i>All assessments must be across the grade unless a suitable moderating procedure has been used</i>													
<b>NAME</b>	<i>Date</i>	9/2	20/2	8/3	2/4	9/5	8/6	30/6	20/7	Total	Pos	%	Gr
1	Max	25	20	20	25	30	25	30	25	200			
2													
3													
4													
5													
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Table 7: Subject Assessment Period Sheet

The cumulative score for each test is calculated and students are ranked/positioned and graded for that assessment period.

SASS - is a students' summary assessment record for a subject for two, three, or four assessment periods. The total score and position of students for each period are entered into the SASS and the cumulative score is calculated. Students are ranked/positioned and graded using the cumulative score. Then the information is used to make the final assessment reports for students.

SUBJECT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY SHEET												
YEAR	SUBJECT				SCHOOL				GRADE			
2001	MATHEMATICS				SAGALAU PRIMARY				7/8			
NAME	Ass Period Total	1	POS	2	POS	3	POS	4	POS	CUM	POS	GR
		200		200		200		200		600		
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												
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20												

Table 8: Subject Assessment Summary Sheet

### *Missing tests for assessment*

#### *How are students who miss test dealt with?*

If a student had missed classes for a short period of time and returns within a day or two the student is given the test and marked together with other students' test papers. However, you need to ensure that the child is not knowledgeable of the test content.

If the student has been absent for a long period of time (one week or more) then an estimate mark should be given on a corresponding proportion of all other tests. (***This is normally done at the end of all testing***) This applies only to students missing tests for genuine and legitimate reasons.

Students who miss the test for invalid reasons will have the mark immediately adjusted on the SAPS. The estimated mark will be one mark less the lowest mark on the set of raw scores. If the lowest is zero, then zero will be awarded as the estimated mark.

### *Recording assessment marks*

#### *Procedures for the SAPS*

1. Enter the marks each student for each test for the assessment period into the SAPS.
2. At the end of the assessment period, calculate the cumulative raw score for each students.
3. Rank the scores and position the students.
4. Convert the raw score for each student into percentage score which is normally out of 100.
5. Grade the students.
6. Transfer the total raw score and position for each student into the SASS. (**Normally done by the subject co-ordinator**).
7. Results entered into the SAPS can be used to provide guide and for students leading up to the end of the assessment period.

#### *Procedures for the SASS*

1. Enter data (i.e. total raw scores and position) for each student from the SAPS into the SASS.
2. Calculate the cumulative raw score, re-rank the scores, and re-position the students based on the cumulative total.
3. Convert the cumulative total score into percentage score.
4. Grade the students.

### *Reporting*

After assessment marks it is proper to report the children's performance to the parent. Parent can be verbally informed of by written form on how their children had performed.

The report includes subject, score, position, grade and a space for comments.

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 **Activity 18**

*Reflect on the following questions*

*What does this assessment and reporting procedure tell you about a student's learning?*

*How does this assessment and reporting procedure measure growth in learning and tell what a student has achieved?*

*How does this assessment and reporting procedure inform the teacher of a student's learning needs so appropriate learning can be planned?*

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## **Balanced assessment**

Neither standardised tests nor teacher assessments alone can provide an accurate picture of a student's learning. A balanced assessment program contains a variety of tools for measuring achievement and tracking the learning progress of a student over time.

Teachers will need to be aware of changes in assessment policies and practices which in turn relate to changes in the curriculum. The move to outcomes based approaches will require assessment practices appropriate for measuring outcomes and performance. Examinations and testing alone will not provide the necessary data on student performance. Teachers must make use of a wide variety of authentic assessment instruments in order to plot the growth of student learning.

## Glossary and Key Terms

<b>Anecdotal Records</b>	An anecdotal record is a descriptive comment made by a teacher about significant student behaviour.
<b>Checklists</b>	Checklists can be used to assess skills, group work, reports and projects. A typical checklist contains student names and the criteria to be evaluated. The criteria may relate to a learning objective, examples, activities or behaviours.
<b>Constructivist Learning</b>	Belief that learning is a constructive process in which the learner builds an internal representation of knowledge based upon prior understanding and personal interpretations of learning.
<b>Continuous Assessment</b>	Performance assessed over a number of occasions and in a variety of situations, providing a better view of student capabilities than is available from a single occasion at the end of a course.
<b>Criterion-Referenced Assessment</b>	Evaluation of student performance relative to a pre-specified standard of achievement. In this case, a student's performance is not compared with that of fellow students, but rather with specified criteria.
<b>Diagnostic Assessment</b>	The process of discovering what students already know and can do and what areas of understanding require further development.
<b>Evaluation</b>	The making of value judgements about student's work.
<b>External Assessment</b>	External assessment occurs when examinations are provided by and marked by external assessors.
<b>Formal Assessment</b>	The systematic use of standardised instruments that are designed by specialists and administered, scored and interpreted under prescribed conditions.
<b>Graphic Organisers</b>	Maps that represent thinking; they represent key skills such as sequencing, comparing and contrasting, classifying. They involve students in active thinking.
<b>Informal Assessment</b>	The non-systematic use of tests or less structured procedures, usually designed by classroom teachers. These are often conducted during students' normal learning activities.
<b>Norm Referenced Assessment</b>	A formal technique whereby a student is compared with a standard, or level of performance. The purpose of this form of assessment is to compare students' work on a particular task / activity.
<b>Objective Tests</b>	Usually contain item, which can be quickly marked by hand, or machine. They are objective because answers can be deemed correct or incorrect, with no subjective judgements. The most common objective tests are multiple-choice items, matching items, alternative choice items (yes/no, true/false) and sentence completion items.
<b>Observation</b>	Observation is the most commonly used technique of assessment. Observations can be very formal, determining in advance how behaviour can be measured, or less formal such as anecdotal evidence. Checklists and rating scales are commonly used to record observations.

<b>Performance Tasks</b>	Involves demonstration of understanding or competence using real life applications to real life problems.
<b>Portfolio Assessment</b>	A collection of completed student work, drafts, sketches and reflections. Portfolios are used to monitor daily performance and to encourage students to reflect on their own learning. They provide an excellent opportunity for ongoing formative and diagnostic assessment. A portfolio might include essays, summaries, research notes, drafts and finished products, creative expressions, tests, major projects.
<b>Rubrics</b>	A set of guidelines for distinguishing between performances or products or different quality.
<b>Self-assessment</b>	Student reflection on their own performance through the use of checklists, questionnaire forms, journals, performance logs which include dates and details about topics which have been completed. Students can monitor their own performance, especially in terms of how they approach problems and implement strategies.
<b>Summative Assessment</b>	The practice of making judgements about student achievement at relevant points in the teaching program such as the conclusion of a topic, module. Formal assessment activities such as projects, essays, assignments and tests are generally used to make summative judgements.