Learning Styles

Read each question or statement and CIRCLE the most appropriate answer (a, b or c). Some will be difficult to answer, but try to answer according to how you would react most often.

1. You usually remember more from a talk when:
   (a) you do not take notes but listen very closely
   (b) you sit near the front of the room and watch the speaker
   (c) you take notes (whether or not you look at them again)

2. You usually solve problems by:
   (a) talking to yourself or a friend
   (b) using an organised approach with lists
   (c) walking, or doing something active

3. You remember phone numbers (when you can't write them down) by:
   (a) saying them again and again
   (b) "seeing" the numbers in your mind
   (c) "writing" the numbers with your finger on the table or wall

4. You find it easiest to learn something new by:
   (a) listening to someone explain how to do it
   (b) watching somebody do it
   (c) trying it yourself

5. When you watch a film/video, you remember best:
   (a) what the characters said, the music
   (b) the setting, scenery and costumes
   (c) how you felt when you watched it

6. When you go to the supermarket you:
   (a) keep repeating your list
   (b) walk up and down the aisles to see what you need
   (c) usually remember what you need from the list you left at home

7. When you try to remember something you:
   (a) hear it in your mind
   (b) see it in your mind
   (c) remember the way that you felt

8. You learn a foreign language best by:
   (a) listening to CDs or tapes
   (b) using reading books
   (c) attending class in which you read and write

9. You are confused about the spelling of a word and so you:
   (a) sound it out
   (b) try to "see" the word in your mind
   (c) write the word several different ways and choose the one that looks right

10. When reading books, you like:
    (a) conversation between characters
    (b) stories that allow you to see pictures in your mind
    (c) stories with a lot of action in the beginning (because you have a hard time sitting still)

11. You usually remember people you have met by their:
    (a) names (you forget faces)
    (b) faces (you forget names)
    (c) mannerisms and movements

12. You are distracted most by:
    (a) noises
    (b) people
    (c) environment (temperature, comfort of furniture etc.)

13. You usually dress:
    (a) fairly well (but clothes are not very important to you)
    (b) neatly (in a particular style)
    (c) comfortably (so you can move easily)

14. You become bored whilst waiting for someone or something, so you choose to:
    (a) talk with a friend
    (b) watch TV or look out of a window
    (c) fidget / get up / walk around

Scoring

Count the score for each letter and write them down:

Total number for A is   …………….   **Auditory (learns best by hearing)**

Total number for B is   …………….   **Visual (learns best by seeing)**

Total number for C is   …………….   **Kinaesthetic (learns best by touching, doing**

The Function of Assessment

Assessment is a process of making
judgements of learner's knowledge, skills
and competence against set criteria.

- Initial assessment is identifying a learners needs
- Formative assessment is tracking learners progress
- Summative assessment is assessing learners achievements

The Assessment Cycle
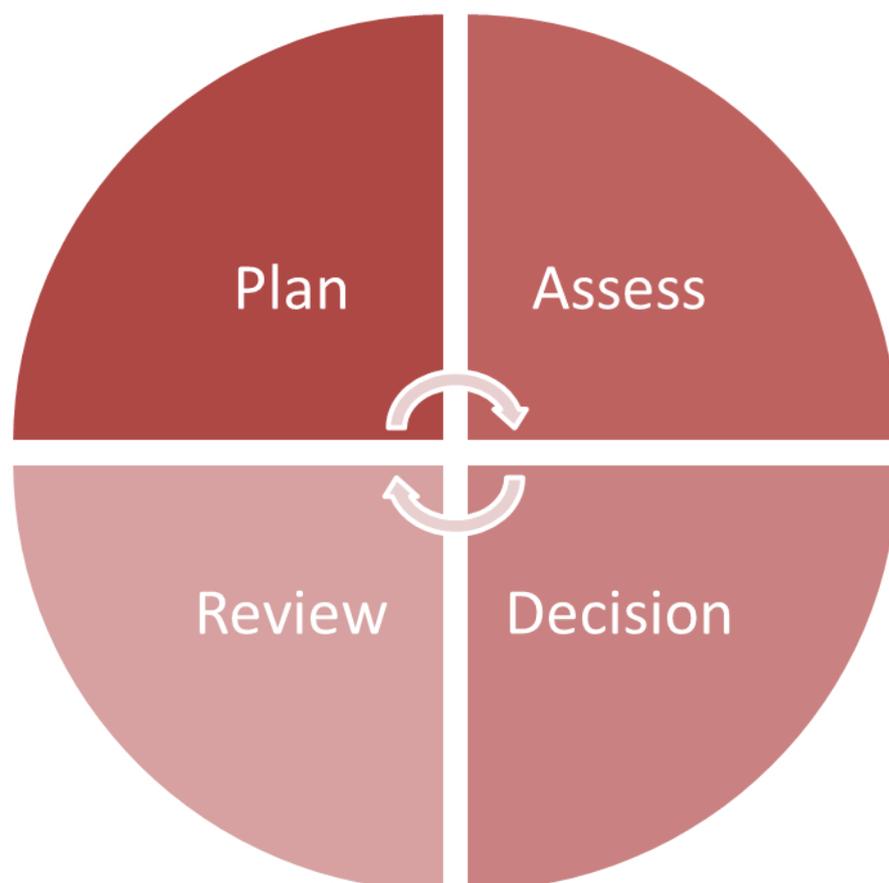
Rules of Evidence

Assessment is defined as the gathering and interpretation of evidence about an individual's performance, which must then be measured against national standards to confirm when the learner is competent and entitled to accreditation. When applying this definition the assessor will be using five basic principles to assess learners.

Validity refers to how well an assessment matches what is being assessed. A good example is a driving test. During the assessment, the learner demonstrates they are able to drive a car, following the Highway Code. The assessment must match the performance being assessed; a written test alone would not be a valid way of assessing a person's ability.

Authenticity refers to the ownership of the evidence. Did the learner really produce it? All evidence submitted by a learner should be generated by the learner and may need to be authenticated. This is particularly true of computer – generated evidence.

Sufficiency relates to the amount of evidence needed to make the judgement. This is a difficult concept to describe because learners will produce evidence of varying quality and amounts. Using standards as a guide, the assessor will need to make judgements about whether the candidate is competent and has met the evidence requirements.

Reliability refers to the predictability of the assessment outcome. An assessment is said to be reliable if the same result is obtained over time or if different assessors make comparable judgements using the same evidence. The outcomes of the assessment should be the same if carried out more than once by the same or different assessors with access to the same evidence.

Currency: learners can use evidence from past achievements, but it must reflect that they can still perform to the standards required. Assessors will need to check that candidates can still demonstrate competence.

Assessment Methods

Observation of performance
You will plan to observe the learner carrying out the main tasks they do as part of their job. Your starting point is the assessment strategy and evidence requirements. These specify what must be observed and state how many times this must be seen. You need to plan the observation with your learner and outline what you will be observing (assessment planning), the date and the time. It is the assessor's responsibility to record the observation, make an assessment decision and give feedback to the learner.

Examining products of work
Product evidence is anything the learner produces as a result of their work. You will be looking at the outcomes or end product of a learner's performance. You can't always be there to observe a learner in action so examining product evidence can help you to confirm a learners' competence.

Questioning
This method of assessment goes hand in hand with observation and other assessment methods. You can use questioning to establish your learner's knowledge and understanding.
Questioning techniques include:
- Open questions
- Closed questions
- Probing questions
- Hypothetical questions

Discussion
A discussion is an in depth, two-way conversation between the assessor and the learner. It's the main method to use when you are assessing complex tasks and the learners ability to show and apply knowledge. Discussions work best when you both know what you will be discussing and when the learner has enough time to prepare. They will need to feel relaxed about talking to you. It is essential to plan the discussion and identify anything the learner may need to bring with them to confirm and support their claim to confidence.

Use of others (witness testimony)
These are other peoples accounts of what your learner can do. In your absence a witness can tell you about how a learner performs over a period of time and under different conditions. You don't always have to use a written account from the witness you could use a taped interview. A witness testimony is evidence whatever form it is in, it is up to you, the assessor, to determine if the evidence is valid, authentic, current and sufficient.

You should brief the witness and let them know what you want them to do beforehand. A witness should be asked to sign and date their testimony and include their contact details, for example their telephone number, this would then allow for the testimony to be followed up if necessary.

Candidate's statements
These are a learner's own account of a situation, how they deal with the situation and the outcome. These should be backed up by reference to product evidence or witnesses. The statements should be counter-signed by someone who can authenticate them as a true account of what took place.

Recognising prior learning
As an assessor it is important to take account of your learner's existing competence before they start their programme. If they can show they are already competent they do not need to undergo unnecessary training or evidence gathering. Assessing prior learning is about recognising and existing knowledge, this forms part of initial assessment and the planning process. Certificates alone do not prove competence, you need to treat them as you would any other evidence using methods such as observation or discussion. You would then need to make your assessment decision in the usual way.

Skills tests
If you use testing, you will need to ensure procedures are in place for both preparing your learners and managing the tests. As an assessor you will need to ensure that your learners are ready for the test: this could include knowing how to deal with online or multi-choice questions. Your centre/organisation will have policies and procedures in place for example, the security of test papers, learners who have additional needs, adequate staff to invigilate and claiming certification.

Assignments/projects
These can be used to develop a learner's skills and knowledge through activities, feedback and practice. As an assessor you can assess a learner's progress as part of the review process.

Case studies
These are a learner's personal account of a situation, how they dealt with the situation, what actions they took and the outcome. The case studies should be counter-signed by some one who can confirm they are a true account of what actually happened.

Assessments of the learner in a simulated environment
When you are assessing learners in a simulated environment you can still use the main assessment methods as you would when assessing under real working conditions. A simulated environment could be a classroom or workshop; however the assessment must be realistic.

Planning Assessments

What is an Assessment Plan?

An assessment plan is a detailed statement of how and when specific outcomes in the standards will be addressed and by which assessment method(s).
It must provide a clear set of actions to be carried out by the learner, the assessor(s) and any others involved in the process with a timescale attached to each activity.
This will be agreed between the learner and one or more assessors. It may also indicate how other people such as supervisors, managers and others may contribute to the assessment process and how.
Assessment planning should include:
- Identification of the standards
- The types and amounts of evidence
- Location and resources required for the assessment
- Time and duration of the assessment
- Any additional learner needs
- How feedback will be given

Assessment plans should be recorded and provide a clear audit trail for the IQA's and EQA's.

Potential Risks

Risks that may be involved in assessment:
- Health and safety
- Unrealistic/ unnecessary stress on the learner
- Inauthentic evidence/ collusion
- Over-assessment
- Potential for unfairness to the learner
- Failure to meet the requirements of any relevant assessment strategy
- Unjustifiable support for the learner

Health and Safety

- Risk assessments
- General housekeeping
- Good planning
- Ensuring suitable environment
- Consider PPE, Lone working, COSHH
- Company H & S procedures – possible induction
- Use simulation where possible
- Stick to the planned activities

Unrealistic stress to learner

- Right time – fair to the learner
- Knowing the standards well – to prevent over assessment and under assessment
- Flexible to suit the learner
- Plan ahead to prevent collusion possibility
- Do not assess before ready – reassurance
- Do not allow unnecessary stress to learner
- Treat each learner the same despite different learning styles
- Use holistic assessment!!!

Unjustifiable support

- Understand learner and their lives
- Recognise level of support needed
- Choosing methods for learner
- Allow suitable time for study, preparation for evidence

Inauthentic Evidence

- Plan discussions/testimonies etc..
- Consequences
- Credible witness testimonies

- Use of questioning
- Get to know learners style and their capabilities

Over Assessment

- Know your standards
- Don't use too much time/too many methods
- Use key questions to draw out info
- Check what other assessors are doing
- Structure time but also be flexible
- Standardisation

Potential for Unfairness

- Standardisation meetings
- Agree assessment methods to be used within the framework
- Agree when sampling will take place throughout

Involving Learners

- Ensure the learner is involved in the planning process
- Check who else may be involved
- Provide all relevant information to the learner
- Use feedback from others and self assessment
- Ensure equality of opportunity when working with learners
- Adapt assessment arrangements to meet the needs of individual learners

Benefits:

- Transparency: the learner understanding the standards/criteria they are being assessed against and how assessment decisions are made

- Efficiency: the learner identifying and providing evidence themselves, others for example witnesses providing evidence

- Identify the contribution of others to the formative assessment – i.e. witness testimony

- Advising when summative assessment might be appropriate

- Learners develop a sense of ownership over the learning and assessment

Adapting Assessment Arrangements

Cultural
- An awareness of different cultures/religions
- Allowing prayer time
- Time off programme to travel abroad
- Food/clothing preference - fasting
- Be aware of their needs
- Don't discriminate
- Respect values and opinions
- Checking preference for male/female assessor

Learning Disabilities
- Check on right qualification level
- Adapt assessment methods
- Extra time if required
- Use voice recordings if possible
- Offer extra support and obtain resources as appropriate
- Student support services
- Awareness of dyslexia/Irlens
- Provide overlays/coloured paper
- Ensuring access is available – risk assessment

Language
- Interpreter or bilingual assessor where possible
- Bilingual resources to be made available
- Record written work for the learner
- Plan extra time
- Visual aids, learning aids

Working Patterns
- Be flexible and understand their commitments
- Times to suit learner – shift patterns
- Good planning and agree with all involved
- Inform employer of arrangements
- Good communication – phone/email
- Check locations – risk assessments

Giving Feedback

What is feedback?

- Feedback is structured information that one person offers to another, about the impact of their actions or behaviour.

- Regular, good quality feedback is one of the most important ingredients in building constructive relationships and in getting jobs done.

- Criticism is one person's judgement of another person, or their work. It is often an unprepared reaction to people who aren't behaving in the way you want them to.

- Criticism is likely to make someone feel devalued or angry; and does nothing to boost self-confidence. It does not help a person to solve the problem. It shows that you dismiss, reject or disapprove, and is unlikely to lead to the result you intended. You will get a result – but it may be a worse situation or a backlash

Keys to good practice

- Ask open not closed questions if you want to find the maximum amount of information
- Ask only one question at a time (that's how many your candidate can answer at a time)
- Speak firmly, clearly and confidently
- Don't make the question longer that the answer
- Wait until the candidate has answered the question before jumping in
- Don't assume you know where the candidate's answers are leading – let them take you there

Why give feedback?

- Feedback has a helpful purpose – the giver aims to help the other person be more effective next time. It should be designed to give benefit to the receiver, not release to the giver.

Feedback can be used to:

- **Influence** someone to do something differently or to change their approach. Feedback is more likely to get a result because it gives the person useful information combined with evidence that you value and support them.
- **Recognise** and **reward** effort – people are more likely to perform well if you let then know you've noticed – and you can say specifically what you like.

- **Improve** the quality of the work you do - through clear and timely performance feedback, more attention to performance quality and more clarity about what, how, why and when of people's job tasks.
- **Build** and **maintain relationships** – open and honest dialogue is an essential part of a constructive working relationship. Giving regular feedback is one way to build an open climate, where trust and support is a mutual expectation.
- **Clarify expectations** and prevent guesswork about performance. People are more likely to meet your expectations if you give accurate information about what you like and value, and what you don't like and don't want.
- **Influence motivation** – people often respond well when you take the time to give them clear, accurate information, along with a stated intention to help them to do better. Given a challenging message, people are more likely to be motivated to change if you show that you have seen, heard and understood them, and you are offering to support them as they change.

Barriers to the feedback process

- Feedback is not always easy to give or receive. The giver and receiver both need to be open to receiving feedback and open to the possibility that the feedback given may be based on incorrect assumptions.
- When both parties believe that the feedback has a positive intent, you can focus on the message and not rush through it. But, before you focus on the message, you often have to work through the negative attitudes or associations.
- You may find it difficult to feedback because you:
- Believe that feedback is negative and unhelpful
- Worry that the other person will not like you
- Believe that the other person cannot handle the feedback
- Have had previous experiences in which the receiver didn't change or was hostile to feedback
- Feel the feedback isn't worth the risk

Receiving corrective feedback may be difficult because you:

- Have the urge to rationalise, since the criticism can feel uncomfortable
- Believe that your self – worth is diminished by suggestions for improvement
- Have had previous experiences in which feedback was unhelpful or unjustified

Questioning Skills

We ask questions to
- Check progress
- Check understanding
- Draw out knowledge and opinions
- Clarify understanding
- Motivate the learner
- Identify any issues or barriers to learning
- Help to find a solution to a problem
- Challenge the learner

Open questions
Open questions tend to start with: *who, what, where, why, when or how*
They do not allow the learner to answer 'yes' or 'no' so you know you will be getting a full response.

Closed questions
The response to closed questions is usually limited to a straight 'yes' or 'no'. They are useful for fact finding, information gathering and identifying issues. They usually start with 'can you…' 'do you…'

Probing questions
These are useful for finding information and designed not only to find out information but also gently to guide candidates into discovering things for themselves, looking deeper