

Rethinking Classroom Assessment

This course is offered to English language teachers in primary schools operating under challenging circumstances. Teachers operating in such contexts often do not have sufficient opportunities for professional development; more so in the area of classroom assessment.

While the negative backwash of high-stakes examinations on teaching and learning and the consequent tendency to teach to the test is certainly not condoned, the existence of such pressures in the classroom can neither be denied nor ignored.

Assessment-driven learning is not all bad if it is an integral part of the larger context of instruction and learning. Indeed it is desirable that the teacher dwells on assessment issues to raise learners' awareness of what is expected of them in examination contexts and provides the necessary scaffolding. This dimension to teaching and learning will enrich and enhance the classroom experience.

However, in order to do this - and do it well, the teacher has to be knowledgeable and competent in the area of testing and evaluation. This course will hopefully equip participants with the knowledge and core competencies essential for doing so.

Objectives

This course will enable participants to:

- examine and rationalize their current practices in testing and classroom-based assessment;
- critically evaluate resources for purposes of item-building and test construction;
- examine and evaluate samples of their own work as test writers and assessors of learning;
- acquire the knowledge and skills that will allow them to establish the integrity of the instruments they prepare for purposes of classroom assessment, and
- establish shared understanding and common interpretations of assessment tools and techniques.

Learning Outcomes

The course will focus on these primary learning outcomes:

- greater awareness of course participants' current test construction practices;
- Informed selection, judicious use and optimization of resources available for item-building and test-construction for assessing desired learning outcomes;
- basic understanding of the use of statistical tools for establishing the integrity of test items;
- wider interpretation of test results ; and
- knowledge of alternative assessment tools and techniques

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Implementation

The course will be delivered using an eclectic, integrated approach. It will allow for a variety of instructional modes and be grounded in experiential learning.

It will draw on the course participants' collective experience and harness individual skills and competencies as they engage in the activities integral to the course.

Course Structure and Time Allocation

The course will have the following structure:

Interaction	8 weeks
Fieldwork / Project	2 weeks
Post-project Interaction	4 weeks

Assessment

Assessment will be through a series of individual assignments, a group task and an end-of-course test. The weighting is as follows:

<i>Course work and Field-work / Project (80%)</i>	
Individual Assignment(2)	30 %
Group Task (1)	10%
Field-work / Project	20%

<i>End-of-Course Test (1)</i>	<i>(20%)</i>
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