

24 Monitoring and assessing learning

A Warm-up

Answer as many questions as you can in five minutes.

Revision test

- 1 How is the future continuous formed?
- 2 Which form is best, and why?
 - a Ah, where's my diary? Oh, yes, here it is. I thought so, *I'm meeting / I'll meet* Laura on the 14th.
 - b People *will buy / are buying* books only from the internet in a few years.
 - c Who do you think *will win / are winning* the football match tonight?
- 3 What things would a learner need to know about new vocabulary items?
- 4 Write some concept checking questions for the grammatical pattern in bold:
I'm going to go to the shop. Is there anything you want?
- 5 How can a teacher help to keep learners motivated?

B Reasons to test learners

- 1 Work in groups. Explain why the test may be taking place in the following testing situations.
 - a A course director is expecting an intake of 100 students. They will all sit a test on the first morning of the course.
 - b A teacher has a new class. In the second lesson she decides to give the class a short test.
 - c A teacher has taught 50 hours of a 100-hour course. He decides to give the class a test.
 - d A class is very near the end of their course. In the penultimate lesson they will have a test.
- 2 Work in small groups. Discuss the reasons teachers test learners. Are there disadvantages to testing learners?

C Ways of testing

- 1 Study the table and answer the questions. Which test types:
 - a test individual language items?
 - b test language items in combination?
 - c test knowledge about language?
 - d test language use?
 - e can be marked objectively?
 - f require subjective marking criteria?

Test types	Examples
Multiple-choice questions	<i>I'm to see Zoë tomorrow. a) gone b) go c) going d) went</i>
Gap-fill exercises	<i>She's very intelligent and I love accent.</i>
Sentence transformations	<i>The shop sold the last copy of the book yesterday. The last copy of the book</i>
Writing a composition	<i>You see the following job advert in a newspaper. Write a letter of application.</i>
Oral interviews	Learners are shown pictures and describe them orally.
Matching	Learners read a text and match pictures to the appropriate parts.
Sentence production	Learners write sentences about themselves using a given structure, such as <i>used to</i> + infinitive.

- 2 Which of the test types in activity C1 could be used to test the following areas?
- receptive skills
 - productive skills
 - vocabulary and grammar
- 3 Work in groups. Decide what features make one learner's spoken language better than another's. For example:
- One learner may use a wider range of vocabulary than another.
- 4 Now design some criteria by which you can assess performance in an oral test given to a group of learners. Use the table below to help you.

	A	B	C
Range of vocabulary and structures	A good range of vocabulary and structures	An adequate range of vocabulary and structures	An inadequate range of vocabulary and structures to communicate effectively
Fluency			
Accuracy (including pronunciation)			
Communication strategies			

B Classroom teaching

D How not to test

Read the learners' complaints. Complete the sentences explaining the problem with the test design in each case.

The instructions just said 'fill the gaps' – so I did and got nearly all of the questions wrong because I was only supposed to use one word. A lot of the students did the same as me.

a Instructions need ...

The course was all about listening and speaking and I really liked it – but at the end we had to do a writing test and I didn't do very well.

b The content of the test should ...

I got the test back from the teacher and I hadn't done very well. I was the worst in the class. The teacher just wrote 'You must work harder' at the bottom but I was working quite hard.

c Feedback should be ...

E Analysing a test

- 1 Read the test on page 109. It comes at the end of a unit of an intermediate coursebook. What things do you think have been taught in the unit?
- 2
 - 1 Do you think the writers of the test intended it to be done in an informal way, or more formally, more like an exam?
 - 2 Would you ask the learners to do this test individually or in groups?
 - 3 Do you like the type of questions that are asked?
 - 4 Are there any sections that you would change?

to

Explain the difference in meaning (if any) between the following pairs of sentences.

B Classroom teaching

F Other ways of monitoring progress

Read about other ways of monitoring learners' progress and answer the questions. Then compare ideas with a partner.

- 1 In each case, who does the assessing, the learner or the teacher?
- 2 Are all the ideas practical?
- 3 Whose idea do you like best and why?
- 4 Whose idea do you like least and why?

a Shaun

Every lesson is an opportunity for teachers to assess how well individuals are progressing. If you monitor what learners say and do closely, you will know if they are making progress.

b Laura

I ask learners to keep a learning diary - they make a few notes after each lesson saying what they thought the aim of the lesson was, what they learned, how much they understood and whether they liked it. Every now and then I take the diaries in and see how the learners think they are doing.

c Kirsty

I give learners a list of what we've done in class and next to each thing they have three columns - 'confident', 'ok' and 'need practice'. They tick the appropriate column for each thing and give it back and I get some idea of how they think they are doing.

REFLECTION

- 1 Answer the questions.
 - a Is it a good idea to tell learners in advance that they will have a test?
 - b Do learners always have to do tests on their own?
 - c Should learners practise doing tests?
 - d What are some of the differences between 'teaching' and 'testing'?
- 2 Assuming that the test in section A was to measure your progress on the CELTA course, to what extent do you think that it was valid?
- 3 Design a short test that would be appropriate for your own teaching practice learners.