Voice over

Professional conversations between teachers allow them to discuss assessment design to ensure that opportunities are provided to students to demonstrate the syllabus objectives across the range of standards.

Reviewing assessment prior to its implementation means that teachers can identify its effectiveness and make adjustments as required.

In this scene, two Senior Education Officers discuss the effectiveness of a Year 12 Maths B knowledge and procedures exam. This instrument is part of an assessment package.

Sue Jones
Senior Education Officer
Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

Hi Peter, I’ve designed a part of a supervised assessment task for Maths B and I wanted to discuss its effectiveness with you.

Peter Antrobus
Senior Education Officer
Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

What factors have you considered in designing it?

Sue Jones

Firstly, I looked at the work program to familiarise myself with what was taught and what needed to be assessed. After writing the test, I checked if it aligned with this and if the test represented a good coverage of the general objectives and the knowledge and procedures developed. I’ve already discovered that I’ve missed a question about exponential graphs and logs in simple routine situations.

Peter Antrobus

Well, let’s look at the opportunities the students have got to achieve in routine and non-routine simple tasks and routine complex — you have indicated that Question 8 here is a non-routine simple opportunity — can you just talk me through that?

Sue Jones

The students have certainly worked with index equations and rewriting them in log form. I saw this question as simple because they could easily understand how to deal with the information and make the connections to the log laws. However, they have to show some insight into how to approach this question which asks them to write an answer in terms of defined variables — and this illustrates the non-routine aspect of the question.
Peter Antrobus: Okay — but what about giving the students a chance to answer a routine complex question — the A and B standard descriptors and also providing opportunities to elicit a response in a simple situation for the D standard — I think you’ll need to think about that. There is certainly a good coverage of simple routine questions that address the C/B standards.

Sue Jones: Okay — and I might also add information about the principle of application — whether the question is life-related or abstract. I’m planning on keeping a track of the questions in this test, so that I ensure balance across the folio of tasks. Once I’ve refined these questions, we’ll need to look at the revised test and discuss how the marks have been allocated — if I’ve been explicit enough so the students understand the performance that is required, and if the process is transparent enough — the marks should reflect the objectives within the criteria.

Voice over: Sue and Peter meet again to discuss the revised assessment instrument.

Peter Antrobus: I’ve had a look at the revised test Sue. I’m happy that we now have an effective instrument that provides additional opportunities for students to demonstrate the criteria across the range of standards, particularly with reference to routine complex questions — let’s discuss how the marking scheme aligns to the syllabus standards.

Sue Jones: Peter, I’ve done the expected response for the test and I’ve also identified the standards descriptors that I think are assessed — this will be communicated to the students as an instrument-specific criteria sheet.

Peter Antrobus: So the students will be aware of how judgments are being made and how the marks align with the standards. I think this is an important skill for teachers — we need to know how to assign marks deliberately and meaningfully. Let’s discuss how we will decide on a grade for this task.

Sue Jones: I have used the marks to create interim cutoffs — using the table, it is clear how many marks have been allocated to simple routine questions — and there is opportunity in both life-related and abstract situations — the C standard states that student work should have characteristics that include life-related OR abstract situations. So the students will not have to achieve all of the 34 marks to be awarded a C for Knowledge and Procedures. Also the routine-complex and the non-routine simple marks have been identified in the table and this will allow me to determine interim cutoffs for the A/B standard.

Peter Antrobus: And of course Sue, if it does not seem clear, or if the result does not appear to fit, you must go back and look at the student work and make an on-balance decision — by matching the evidence with the standard descriptors.

Sue Jones: Yes, it’s a standards-based system, and all the decisions should be based on the standards within the syllabus.
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<td>Peter Antrobus</td>
<td>This represents one part of the assessment package and we must use all available tasks to decide about the final levels of achievement.</td>
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<td>Sue Jones</td>
<td>Absolutely.</td>
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<td>Voice over</td>
<td>Teachers use the syllabus objectives and standards when designing assessment to ensure that it is effective.</td>
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<td>Professional conversations allow teachers to quality assure assessment before it is implemented.</td>
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<td>Effective assessment instruments allow teachers to make valid and reliable judgments about student responses.</td>
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