Assessment: From the syllabus to the classroom

Transcript of video (Part 2)

Transcript of video 2 of 5

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Designing assessment

Lainie Thornton: State Review Panel Chair
English for ESL Learners

I’m thinking about the students writing a feature article for their assessment piece. But I want to make sure that they have the opportunity to demonstrate the general objectives. How can I do that effectively?

Jo Genders: Senior Education Officer
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Okay. Well, let’s start with the objectives, shall we? Okay, so why don’t you take me through what it is that you’ve been teaching the students from the objectives, so we can ensure that those same opportunities are provided when you assess them?

Shauna Bouel: Senior Education Officer
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Effective assessment is assessment that provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to the syllabus general objectives and dimensions, and then can be matched to the standards A to E.

Satu Cooper: Senior Education Officer
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

When we design assessment, it is important to provide opportunities from the A to the E standard. We do that by looking at what the discriminating qualities are from the syllabus standards. So, each dimension and each general objective has a range of descriptors, and they may be also cognitive processes that the student has to demonstrate in their response. And we try to embed that language into the task.

David Madden: District Review Panel Chair
Physics

The sorts of opportunities that I’m looking for are mirrored in the syllabus, in the general objectives of the syllabus. And so the way I provide opportunities is to have diversity in my assessment, so I use a range of assessment instruments. And a range of responses required from students not only within tasks. So, for example, in a supervised assessment or a test there’ll be a range of different types of responses required. But then different types of assessment like extended experiments or extended response tasks. So providing a variety of different types of assessment provides a range of opportunities for students.
Peter Antrobus:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics B

We assess in the general objectives. In some other subjects it might be called dimensions. And we look at those with the content that we might be provided for, to actually look at how we might match the learning experiences that they’ve seen in the classroom, and address that in an assessment instrument that will match that.

Bevan Penrose:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics C

There’s an assignment we did on dynamics earlier this year where the students had to investigate the motion on a ride at a show. And I asked them to give me information about the velocity and acceleration and how they … those parameters, would determine how a person felt on the ride. Now that allowed students to give me answers that ranged in pretty much just the basic idea, and a few graphs, right through to very detailed ideas about the motion that someone would experience on that particular ride. And so even though it was one question, I got a … I got that wonderful range from C to A, where my top students were really producing great calculus and great modelling, whereas the C-standard students were still able to answer the question and give a pretty reasonable response.

David Madden:
District Review Panel Chair
Physics

When we come to design an assessment task — I mean firstly it has to be considered in its context within the folio or within a suite of assessment tasks that we use. And, I guess, the main consideration there is: Which of the general objectives are we trying to assess in that particular task? Because not every general objective is going to be appropriate to assess in a particular task. For example, if we’re looking at an extended experimental investigation, it might be appropriate to assess all the general objectives. But perhaps not so much in something like a supervised assessment. Wouldn’t you agree?

David Austin:
State Review Panel Chair
Physics

Yes. And, exactly. We can, say, take the different types of supervised assessment. So there may be one type of supervised assessment where we are going to be looking at, for example, an exam-style question: Several of the key points regarding the Knowledge and conceptual understanding. So we’d be looking at all three of those objectives. Whereas, if we’re doing a stimulus response-type supervised assessment, we’re going to focus more on the Evaluation and concluding part of the three general objectives. And perhaps another thought that we could look at is to say: Okay, how does this relate back to the exit standards?

David Madden:
District Review Panel Chair
Physics

That’s right. So, for example, if we’re considering an EEI, it might be that a particular EEI would allow the assess … the objectives of say Describe and explaining processes to be assessed. Whereas a different EEI might allow you to assess Linking and applying algorithms. Whereas, if we consider for example, a supervised assessment, it may be that there are some objectives or general objectives that aren’t appropriate to assess in that sort. For example, one of an Investigative processes that asks you to assess secondary data, and unless you’re doing something like a prac test, there’s no opportunity really to collect primary data. So it would have to be secondary data that you’re looking at.
Jo Genders:
Senior Education Officer
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

So if we look at dimension three, and the first objective is to evaluate ideas, attitudes and values in texts. Then if you’ve been teaching the students about the particular ideas and attitudes, then using that same language of the objective is … is exactly what it is that you want them to do in their own assessment instrument.

Lainie Thornton:
State Review Panel Chair
English for ESL Learners

Terrific.

Jo Genders:
Senior Education Officer
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Okay. This one as well, where you’re asking them to actually evaluate concepts or identities. You might specify what it is that you want them to evaluate — whether it’s concepts about particular issues, or particular topics — but you’ve been teaching the students how to evaluate those things. So you’ll be assessing their capacity to evaluate in their own assessment as well.

Lainie Thornton:
State Review Panel Chair
English for ESL Learners

So when I’m designing the assessment task, I’d need to use the language of ‘use and evaluate ideas’ or ‘evaluate perspectives and representations’, so the kids are clearly making that link when they write to the general objectives?

Jo Genders:
Senior Education Officer
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Absolutely. And you’re giving them the opportunities then, aren’t you, to demonstrate the objectives? You’re using the exact language that the syllabus says: This is what students need to be able to do. So, using that language means that you’re giving them the opportunity to do it.