Situating language assessment practices

Pre-reading

The understanding of assessment in this module is informed by the ideas in:

Assessment Reform Group (2002). *Assessment for Learning: 10 principles*.
    See http://k1.ioe.ac.uk/tlrp/C1E3.PPF

These principles are also available and can be downloaded from the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency website (www.qcda.gov.uk/4336.aspx). See Handout 2.

Module 8, Assessing language learning, in the *Professional Standards Project*.
    See http://www.pspl.unisa.edu.au/

Scarino, A. & Liddicoat, A.J. (2009). *Teaching and Learning Languages: A Guide*. Chapter 5, 'Assessing'. Melbourne. Curriculum Corporation.
    See www.tllg.unisa.edu.au

You may wish to familiarise yourself with these resources before participating in the activities of this module.

Participants will need to bring to the workshop their own state/territory curriculum and assessment frameworks.

NOTES

Section 1: ***Situating language assessment in educational change***

Stream C: Module 11

Situating language assessment practices

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Module overview

Section 1: Situating language assessment in educational change

Section 2: Situating language assessment in the context of curriculum and assessment frameworks

Section 3: Expanding language assessment practices

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This module is divided into three sections:

1. Situating language assessment in educational change
2. Situating language assessment in the context of curriculum and assessment frameworks
3. Expanding language assessment practices

Session objectives

In this module you will:

- consider assessment practices in languages education in the context of educational change
- critically analyse current state/territory-based curriculum and assessment frameworks and their implications for assessment in practice
- consider ways of expanding teachers' and students' understanding of assessment for different purposes
- consider assessment in the context of developing learning

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In this module participants will:

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- critically analyse current state/territory-based curriculum and assessment frameworks and their implications for assessment in practice
- consider ways of expanding teachers' and students' understanding of assessment for different purposes
- consider assessment in the context of developing learning.

Connecting to the *Standards*

The *Standards* are best seen as an integrated set of dimensions as captured in the single standard about being an accomplished teacher of languages and cultures. Specifically, the focus in this module is on assessment in relation to:

- **Educational theory and practice**
- **Language and culture**
- **Language and pedagogy**
- **Ethics and responsibility**

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The enlarged understanding of assessment that this module promotes is captured in the standards for theory and practice as both are involved in assessment; in language and culture since assessment encompasses both; in language and pedagogy because assessment is also integrated with pedagogies (which include diagnosis, scaffolding, etc.); and ethics and responsibility since assessment is ultimately about fairness.

Module 11:
Situating language assessment practices

Overview

The module focuses on situating language assessment practices in languages education. There have been major changes in our understanding of assessment in education: its purposes, its relationship to learning and accountability in education, and the roles of teachers and learners in assessment. For this reason it is useful to situate language assessment practices in the context of broad educational change and, at the same time, to examine our own stance in relation to assessment practices, both at the level of the educational system and at the level of an individual school program. The module calls for expanding language assessment practices and understanding of the assessment process. As such, the module addresses the single, generic standard for accomplished languages and cultures teaching, with particular focus on:

- Educational theory and practice
- Language and culture
- Language pedagogy
- Ethics and responsibility.

This module is divided into three sections:

1. Situating language assessment in educational change
2. Situating language assessment in the context of curriculum and assessment frameworks
3. Expanding language assessment practices

Objectives

In this module participants will:

- consider assessment practices in languages education in the context of educational change
- critically analyse current state/territory-based curriculum and assessment frameworks and their implications for assessment in practice
- consider ways of expanding teachers' and students' understanding of assessment for different purposes
- consider assessment in the context of developing learning.

NOTES

Section 1: **Situating language assessment in educational change**

Assessment and learning

- assessment **of** learning
- assessment **for** learning
- assessment **as** learning

common theme: assessment ↔ learning

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These three phrases are currently used by all educational systems around Australia (and beyond) to describe a major shift in assessment. Although all three purposes of assessment (assessment **of**, **for**, and **as** learning) are seen as important, there is now an increasing emphasis on assessment **for** learning (national and international educational testing systems notwithstanding).

It should be noted here that the recently established (national) Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has begun the development of a national curriculum. The second stage of work will involve the development of a national curriculum in languages. It should also be noted that national literacy assessments are in place in all states and territories of Australia, and Australia, along with many countries, participates in international testing such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This is a program of comparative international assessments of the outcomes of school learning, conducted by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development since 2000 (see http://www.pisa.oecd.org).

A shift

- from outcomes/standards (assessment **of** learning) to assessment **for** learning

→ broadening our understanding of assessment, its purposes, relationship to learning and accountability in assessment

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The shift towards assessment for learning can be seen as a reaction to the exclusive emphasis throughout the 1990s on system-level assessment through curriculum and assessment frameworks that emphasised 'outcomes' and/or 'standards'. Although these frameworks sought to depict learning K–12, they were developed primarily for the purposes of system-wide accountability, even though in Australia they were never fully implemented in all areas of learning. These frameworks are still in place in each state and territory but, at the same time, it has been recognised in the past 5 to 10 years that an emphasis on outcomes/standards (as opposed to processes of learning) is insufficient to yield educational improvement.

Key ideas/Learning
Situating language assessment in educational change

Interaction/tasks/questions	*Supporting resources*
Facilitator interactive presentation The facilitator introduces the module, inviting discussion/comments with each slide. Anticipated time: 20 minutes	PowerPoint slides 11.2–11.12

NOTES

Section 1: **Situating language assessment in educational change**

In languages education, the focus on outcomes and standards has been a greater problem than in some other areas of the curriculum. This is because in most cases within the curriculum and assessment frameworks outcomes have been expressed generically (for all languages or groups of languages). As such they have provided a limited and limiting perspective on language learning and have remained remote from the reality of classrooms. This situation is further compounded by the fact that in languages education, the availability of a real-life, visible benchmark (in the form of native-speaker proficiency) sets unrealistic expectations of performance in languages education, where the language is a second or subsequent language for most students. The issues are particularly marked in languages education at the primary level because there is a relatively short history of languages education in primary schools and, in many cases, there is a limited amount of time available for learning languages; this constrains both learning and its assessment.

Consequences of the focus on 'outcomes'

- the focus on 'outcomes' means that assessment has been understood in a particular way and assessment practices have mirrored this understanding
  – a focus on particular items of knowledge and objects/products
  – a focus on system/level of reporting (with little regard for how the assessment was made)
  – a lack of integration with teaching and learning
  – professional development with the aim to induct teachers into the system → teachers as 'implementers'
→ an emphasis on reporting rather than understanding the processes of assessment.

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It is important here to highlight each of these consequences. Taken together, they have meant that assessment has become a *technology* (i.e. a set of rules and procedures) that has shaped teachers' assessment practices in particular ways, rather than being deeply conceptual matter of thinking through what it is that is to be assessed, how, drawing upon what kinds of evidence, making what kinds of judgments, etc.

Ask teachers to reflect critically on this issue.

NOTES

Section 1: ***Situating language assessment in educational change***

Expanding language assessment practices

- the move to assessment **for** learning expands assessment practices to include:
  - a focus on processes of understanding and using language
  - a focus on feedback to students and interested others
  - an integration of teaching, learning and assessment
  - teachers as experts.

→ assessment as a larger activity of inquiry.

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The technology of assessment has the power to shape language learning itself, that is, what learning is actually valued.

A focus only on knowledge of facts, objects, and products does not capture the important *processes of learning to communicate and coming to understand what it is that is involved in the process of communication*.

This contemporary goal of language learning and assessment goes beyond traditional understanding of communicative language assessment, which has tended to focus on 'performing' the target language (sometimes as a form of pseudo-communication), without necessarily also developing a sophisticated understanding of what is actually involved in successful communication within and across languages.

Ask teachers to begin to reflect on any areas of omission/gaps in their system's framing of learning outcomes. (Note: this is discussed further in the next section.)

Note the way that the role of teachers changes as assessment is expanded. Assessment as inquiry means that teachers are open to **finding out** more and more about their students' learning. It is similar to processes of investigation or research that need to be open, systematic, informed by data, and analysed to lead to change in an ongoing way.

NOTES

Section 1: **Situating assessment in educational change**

Connecting assessment and learning – 1

- assessment is fundamentally linked to learning
- learning and assessment as social and cultural (i.e. culturally embedded, socially supported) processes
- assessment as:
  - interactive
  - mediated
  - scaffolded through talk and other mediational devices (tools and technologies)
  - multiple activities
  - dynamic: developmental trajectories of learners
  - inquiry for (teachers *and* students).

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The fundamental purpose of assessment is to understand students' learning and to make considered judgments of students' performance and progress. This is the case for all purposes of assessment (assessment **of** learning, i.e. summative assessment, and assessment **for** learning, i.e. formative), though the emphases will be different.

Assessment **for** learning, that is, formative assessment, is specifically intended to prioritise the purpose of assessment in promoting learning.

Assessment, like learning, is a social and cultural process. [See Module 8. slides 8.7–8.11 for a review of learning theory and the relationship between assessment and learning.] The qualities of assessment outlined in Slide 11.10 are derived from contemporary, *sociocultural* views of learning.

Connecting assessment and learning – 2

- Formative assessment:
  - Assessment for learning is any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting pupils' learning. It thus differs from assessment designed primarily to serve the purposes of accountability, or ranking, or of certifying competence.
  - An assessment activity can help learning if it provides information to be used as feedback by teachers, and by their pupils in assessing themselves and each other, to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes 'formative assessment' when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet learning needs (Black et al. 2002).

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Note Black et al.'s (2002) definition of formative assessment. It is assessment that 'forms' or 'shapes' learning. An assessment activity can only be considered to be formative when the information gathered about students' learning is actually used to change what students do. In other words, formative assessment is not just a rehearsal for summative assessment; it should yield evidence of actual change in students' actions and understanding.

Rationale for formative assessment

Research (Black et al. 2002) has established that:

- standardised summative assessments do not provide adequate information on students' achievements and progress

- systematic formative assessment can raise standards of achievement

→ (1) but, more research is needed on formative assessment practices and (2) assessment still needs to be defensible

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In current times, in education in general and in languages education in particular there is a renewed interest in formative assessment. Although this can be understood as a reaction against the 1990s focus on outcomes, research has now provided a deeper rationale.

Research (see Black et al. 2002) has shown that systematic, formative assessment conducted by teachers can in fact change students' achievements and success. It is this finding that has led to a growing emphasis on assessment **for** learning, or formative assessment.

NOTES

*Section 1: **Situating language assessment in educational change***

Small-group task

The two quotations provided elaborate on how sociocultural learning is understood.

Discuss each quotation and draw out implications for assessment for learning in languages education. Also note any issues you consider in your discussion.

Whole-group task

Prepare notes to facilitate whole-group discussion.

Anticipated time: 30 minutes

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For the small-group discussion, invite participants to use Handout 1. When debriefing the group discussion, use Slides 11.14 and 11.15 in turn.

The facilitator collates on the whiteboard all the implications as elaborated by groups.

It may be useful to connect the implications to *Assessment for Learning: 10 principles* (Handout 2).

Sociocultural theories of learning and their implications – 1

Sociocultural theories of learning focus on … what learners with minds and bodies, home and peer cultures and languages, previous learning experiences, interests and values – bring to their learning environments and how that shapes their interactions with those learning environments. Thus, all of the questions about meaning, experience, language, culture, positioning, identities, and so on need to be asked about the interactions between particular learners and their learning environments as they evolve over time (their learning trajectories).

(Haertel, Moss, Pullin & Gee, 2008:8)

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Haertel et al. (2008) describes the implications of sociocultural theories of learning. The quotations highlight that in assessment based on sociocultural theories of learning, the focus is on learners and their lifeworlds (see Module 3).

How can this understanding of the variability of learners be incorporated in assessment, which traditionally seeks generalisability and standardisation? This is a potential tension that warrants discussion.

Sociocultural theories of learning and their implications – 2

A sociocultural approach places a premium on learners' experiences, social participation, use of mediating devices (tools and technologies), and position within various activity systems or communities of practice. The word 'culture' has taken on a wide variety of different meanings in different disciplines. Nonetheless, it is clear that, as part and parcel of our early socialization in life, we each learn ways of being in the world, of acting, and interacting, thinking and valuing, and using language, objects, and tools that critically shape our early sense of self. A situated/sociocultural perspective amounts to an argument that students learn new academic 'cultures' at school (new ways of acting, interacting, valuing and using language objects and tools) and, as in the case of acquiring any new culture, the acquisition of these new cultures interacts formidably with learners' initial cultures.

(Gee, 2008:100)

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It will be important to ask participants to consider these quotations and implications phrase by phrase. The fundamental idea here is that in assessment for learning we cannot just consider students' products (essays, models, etc.) but that we need to consider the meanings that students make of particular experiences, texts, etc. That is, we need to constantly ask: What does it mean to the students themselves? What personal connections are they making? This kind of information is essential in using assessment to understand individual student's learning and progress.

Key ideas/Learning
Situating language assessment in educational change

Interaction/tasks/questions	*Supporting resources*
Small-group task The two quotations provided elaborate on sociocultural learning theories. Discuss each quotation and draw out implications for assessment for learning in languages education. Also note any issues you consider in the course of your discussion. **Whole-group task** Prepare notes to facilitate whole-group discussion. Anticipated time: 30 minutes	PowerPoint slides 11.13,11.14, and 11.15 Handout 1 Handout 2

Key ideas/Learning
Situating language assessment in educational change

NOTES

Section 2: **Situating language assessment in the context of curriculum and assessment frameworks**

Use of curriculum and assessment frameworks

- All K-12 frameworks address:
  - a) What students need to know (nature and scope of learning)
  - b) What is an appropriate standard (level of achievement required)

- They frame valued learning
- They have limits
- There is no evidence from implementation studies on how they are used by teachers.

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All state/territory systems in Australia have developed curriculum and assessment frameworks and require teachers to use them (with different degrees of prescription). It is for this reason that assessment also needs to be situated in the context of such frameworks and local system policy requirements with regard to assessment. Since the framework for each state and territory of Australia is different, this module invites facilitators and participants to incorporate their local knowledge of their own frameworks in this discussion. Depending on the group, participants can choose to discuss the framework as a whole or for a particular phase of schooling.

These frameworks address what students need to learn (nature and scope of learning = content standards) and how well they need to know it (= performance standards).

They provide an architecture for structuring learning that is normally achieved through a set of **strands**. These can be useful in helping to define the field; on the other hand they can also constrain.

The frameworks also provide a system of levels and particular ways of describing outcomes or standards of performance. In the languages area not all states/territories are gathering data and student performances at a system-wide level. Nevertheless, the culture of assessment that prevails with outcomes or standards-oriented assessment permeates the languages area and many teachers of languages have adopted the recommended practices simply because they are members of particular school communities.

Key ideas/Learning
Situating language assessment in the context of curriculum and assessment frameworks

Interaction/tasks/questions	Supporting resources
Facilitator interactive presentation The facilitator gives a presentation, inviting discussion/comments with each slide. Anticipated time: 5 minutes	PowerPoint slide 11.16

NOTES

Section 2: **Situating language assessment in the context of curriculum and assessment frameworks**

Analysing curriculum and assessment frameworks

Examine a section of the curriculum and assessment framework for your state/ territory as it applies to one of your classes. Use the guiding questions in Handout 3 to guide your analysis.

How does it frame learning? What underlying assumptions does it make about assessment?

How does this framing compare with *Assessment for Learning: 10 principles* (see Handout 2) and the implications you identified?

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In this task participants are invited to consider critically how their current frameworks, in fact, frame the key concepts of language, culture, learning, and progressions in learning. What does the framework allow them to do? How does the framework place limits on them?

Some participants will hesitate to critique their own state/territory framework since it constitutes their jurisdiction's curriculum and assessment policy. This is a real source of tension that should be discussed. Teachers should come to understand that it is inevitable that the frameworks have limits because, most frequently in the languages area, the framework needs to be re-interpreted for a specific language *and* for particular students. Students cannot simply be assumed to be at particular 'levels' because of their age or year level. Rather, teachers work with students according to their particular profile and constantly provide scaffolds towards improvements.

By looking at the strands and the detailed descriptions of the content standards, teachers will be able to think about the place of knowledge of the language and culture, the place of communication, the extent to which language and culture are viewed as related or separate. The descriptions of outcomes or performance standards will add to the view of language and culture that is captured in relation to assessment in the framework. For example, is there an emphasis on content or products, or content or products and process? Is there an emphasis on the variable use of language in context, etc.?

In summarising this discussion facilitators should highlight that while teachers need to follow their system's requirements in relation to assessment and reporting, this does not mean that they cannot also consider assessment **for** learning in their classrooms. There is likely to be a tension here for some participants about the extent of experimentation that they see as feasible. This tension should be acknowledged, but assessment **for** learning should also be formalised as part of the assessment.

Teachers necessarily adapt frameworks to fit their own local context and, in doing so, they may compromise curriculum and assessment policy; not to do so, however, may compromise learners and learning.

Key ideas/Learning
Situating language assessment in the context of curriculum and assessment frameworks

Interaction/tasks/questions	Supporting resources
Examine a section of the curriculum and assessment framework for your state/territory as it applies to one of your classes. Use the guiding questions in Handout 3 to guide your analysis.	PowerPoint slide 11.17
How does it frame learning? What underlying assumptions does it make about assessment?	Handouts 2 and 3
How does this framing compare with *Assessment for Learning: 10 principles* and the implications you identified?	
Anticipated time: 45 minutes	

NOTES

*Section 3: **Expanding language assessment practices***
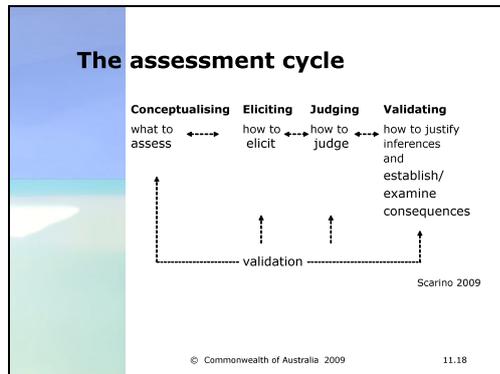
The assessment cycle provides a way of reconceptualising classroom assessment because it offers key steps that should be considered in planning and implementing assessment. These include:

- conceptualising – this reminds us that assessment is a conceptual matter (not only a technical one) of thinking deeply about what is being assessed
- eliciting – developing ways of obtaining assessment information; this involves not only tasks but also a range of data-gathering processes: observation, questioning, recordings of interactions, etc.
- judging – how to interpret students' performances, how to understand evidence
- validating – how to ensure that the inferences made about assessment are justifiable and fair and that there are no adverse consequences.

These four steps are interrelated, with conceptualising language learning guiding the eliciting. The judging then incorporates a consideration of what it is that is important to assess (conceptualising), and gives due attention to whether the ways of eliciting have, in fact, canvassed the language learning and language use that is of interest to the teacher. Validating is the process of quality assurance whereby the ecology of the whole cycle is considered. The quality of assessment cannot just be assumed; it needs to be demonstrated.

This cycle is used as a basis for thinking about assessment in all the Stream C modules.

These four key steps are analogous to the process of inquiry.

It represents a way of thinking about all forms of assessment – assessment for learning and assessment of learning.

Key ideas/Learning
Expanding language assessment practices

Interaction/tasks/questions	*Supporting resources*
Facilitator presentation The facilitator reminds participants of the assessment cycle discussed in Module 8 and describes its value. The presentation continues with the facilitator inviting discussion/comments with each slide. Anticipated time: 20 minutes	PowerPoint slides 11.18–11.22

NOTES

*Section 3: **Expanding language assessment practices***

Expanding language assessment – 1

- inherent assessments: those that happen informally and non-verbally in **all** social situations
- discursive assessments: those that occur when members of a social group talk about what they are doing in an evaluative way
- documentary assessments: those that occur when activities are evaluated according to a scheme that produces numbers and symbols.

(Jordan & Putz 2004:346)

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There is a need to expand our understanding and practices in assessment in several ways.

Specifically, in relation to assessment in languages education, the expansion begins with the understanding of language learning (and therefore assessment) as involving both communication and understanding the context and processes of communication.

This, in turn, has implications for ways of assessing (Module 12), considering evidence (Module 13), and investigating assessment (Module 14).

Jordan and Putz (2004: 346) identify three different forms of assessment. They recognise that there is a form of assessment that takes place in any kind of social interaction, when people weigh up what each is saying, why, and how. Discursive assessments are those that occur in social interaction, as an evaluation part of the activity of interacting itself. Documentary assessment, as the name suggests, is assessment that is documented, registered, and converted into the shorthand of marks or grades. The last is the most prevalent. The other two need to be expanded in the assessment repertoire of teachers.

Expanding language assessment – 2

We are moving here from an educational practice of assessment where we have defined *a priori* what we are looking for, to an educational practice where we are participating in activities in which we formulate representations to better understand and transform the world around us. If our purpose is to understand and support learning and knowing and to make inferences about these phenomena, then it seems that the idea of inquiry – open, critical, dialogic – rather than assessment (as currently understood) would be more helpful.

(Delandshere, 2002:1475)

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Delandshere is an educational researcher who highlights the important connection between assessment and research. The fundamental purpose of the style of assessment that she advocates is to better understand the learning that is occurring, and not just observe and document its products. In this way assessment becomes a process of ongoing inquiry.

NOTES

*Section 3: **Expanding language assessment practices***

Expanding language assessment – 3

From tasks to evidence

… expanding the conventional instrument-based understandings of assessments to incorporate all of the evidence-based evaluations and judgments that occur in interaction in (classroom) learning environments. This includes formal assessments that we recognize as 'an assessment' as well as informal assessments, both tacit and explicit, that routinely occur in classroom interaction.

(Moss, 2008:223)

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Pamela Moss is another educational assessment researcher who advocates expanding the kind of evidence that teachers gather in assessment. This evidence is generated not only from formal assessment procedures, but also from classroom interaction itself.

Features of assessment for learning

Assessment that:

• focuses on the *meanings* that students make of things

• incorporates a range of interactions, representations, resources, technologies, and tools

• considers the positioning of students in interaction and the roles/identities enacted

• is dynamic, focused on progress in learning

• includes:
 – moment-to-moment interaction
 – tasks and written work
 – conversations that probe meanings
 – surveys, interviews, and self-reports
 – summaries of actions and accomplishments

• considers feedback.

→ Focus not only on knowledge and skill, but also on students' embodied experience and meanings within and of that experience.

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This list includes some features that characterise assessment for learning. Importantly, the evidence that emerges from this kind of expanded assessment has value in making assessments of learning as much as it does in assessments for learning. The shift is fundamentally towards recognising the importance of the embodied experience of students in their learning, that is, what the students themselves make of particular learning experiences and, through the experience, what identities students are developing.

NOTES

Section 3: *Expanding language assessment practices*

Small-group or individual task

Examine *The processes of formative assessment* as described by Torrance & Pryor (1998).Which of these processes could you use, how would you use them, and why? Prepare a plan that sets out some changes you would need to make to your ways of assessing in order to incorporate classroom-based assessment *for* learning that you will need to do in your particular system.

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Facilitators may need to choose either the task in slide 11.23 or the one in 11.24, depending on the time available.

Torrance and Pryor are a team of researchers who have conducted detailed studies of formative assessment.

Much of this work has involved recording students' interactions and then using transcripts of these to analyse learning. As such, their research demonstrates, among other things, the use of evidence other than that derived from students' products.

The table in Handout 4 provides possible ways of gathering evidence, why a teacher would use them, and the likely effect on the student.

Ongoing research is needed in the area of formative assessment as it remains an area that is under-researched, particularly in languages education.

Small-group or individual task

Use the questions below to reflect on your own assessment practices in relation to the discussion in this module.

- *What* are your students learning?
- How do they interpret/figure things out?
- What do they mean when they interact?
- How do they use their language(s)?
- How are they participating in activities?
- What positions are they enacting in relation to each other and the learning material?
- What identities are they developing?

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These questions are the kinds of questions teachers should ask themselves continuously as they expand their assessment practices.

In this task teachers are invited to reconsider their regular assessment practices with a view to making some changes to give greater emphasis to formative assessment.

Key ideas/Learning
Expanding language assessment practices

Interaction/tasks/questions	*Supporting resources*
Small-group or individual task Examine *The processes of formative assessment* as described by Torrance & Pryor (1998). Which of these processes could you use, how would you use them, and why? Prepare a plan that sets out some initial thoughts on changes you would need to make to your ways of assessing in order to incorporate classroom-based assessment **for** learning. Include also the assessment **of** learning that you will need to carry out in your particular system. Participants share their initial thoughts. Anticipated time: 15 minutes	PowerPoint slide 11.23 Handout 4

Key ideas/Learning
Expanding language assessment practices

Interaction/tasks/questions	*Supporting resources*
Small-group or individual task Use the questions below to reflect on your own assessment practices in relation to the discussion in this module. • *What* are your students learning? • How do they interpret/figure things out? • What do they mean when they interact? • How do they use their language(s)? • How are they participating in activities? • What positions are they enacting in relation to each other and the learning material? • What identities are they developing? Anticipated time: 30 minutes	PowerPoint slide 11.24

NOTES

Possible investigations

- Critically evaluate your current assessment practices for one class group of students in the light of the discussion in this module. Prepare a statement of what you might change and how.

- Record a lesson in which you are seeking to confirm students' understanding of a recently introduced concept. Analyse the interaction in terms of the key ideas of assessment for learning, including scaffolding, questioning, feedback.

- Review the feedback you have provided to students on the written work for a whole class or group of students. What do you notice about the feedback? Does it meet the requirement of actually supporting students' learning needs?

- Consider the assessment you currently use in your own practice. How well does it capture the full range of learning that takes place in language learning? How could you capture better the learning that is least well captured?

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Possible investigations

- Critically evaluate your current assessment practices for one class group of students in the light of the discussion in this module. Prepare a statement of what you might change and how.

- Record a lesson in which you are seeking to confirm students' understanding of a recently introduced concept. Analyse the interaction in terms of the key ideas of assessment for learning, including scaffolding, questioning, feedback.

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Attachments

Handout 1   Sociocultural theories of learning and their implications for assessment practice

Handout 2   *Assessment for Learning: 10 principles*

Handout 3   Questions to guide a critical review of state/territory curriculum and assessment frameworks

Handout 4   The processes of formative assessment

Sociocultural theories of learning and their implications for assessment practice

Quotation 1

Sociocultural theories of learning focus on … what learners with minds and bodies, home and peer cultures and languages, previous learning experiences, interests and values – bring to their learning environments and how that shapes their interactions with those learning environments. Thus, all of the questions about meaning, experience, language, culture, positioning, identities, and so on need to be asked about the interactions between particular learners and their learning environments as they evolve over time (their learning trajectories).

(Haertel, Moss, Pullin & Gee, 2008: 8)

Quotation 2

A sociocultural approach places a premium on learners' experiences, social participation, use of mediating devices (tools and technologies), and position within various activity systems or communities of practice. The word 'culture' has taken on a wide variety of different meanings in different disciplines. Nonetheless, it is clear that, as part and parcel of our early socialization in life, we each learn ways of being in the world, of acting, and interacting, thinking and valuing, and using language, objects, and tools that critically shape our early sense of self. A situated/sociocultural perspective amounts to an argument that students learn new academic 'cultures' at school (new ways of acting, interacting, valuing and using language objects and tools) and, as in the case of acquiring any new culture, the acquisition of these new cultures interacts formidably with learners' initial cultures.

(Gee, 2008: 100)

Assessment for Learning: 10 principles

Assessment Reform Group (2002). *Assessment for Learning: 10 principles*.
   See http://k1.ioe.ac.uk/tlrp/C1E3.PPF

These principles are also available and can be downloaded from the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency website (www.qcda.gov.uk/4336.aspx).

Questions to guide a critical review of curriculum and assessment frameworks

Nature of the framework

1. What is the view of language that underpins the framework? How do you learn? Consider in particular the 'strands'.

2. What is the view of culture that underpins the framework? How do you know?

3. What is the view of language learning that underpins the framework? How do you know?

4. How are the outcomes or performance standards described? Is this an adequate account of student learning and achievement? How do you know? Are there any gaps/omissions? If so, what are they?

Use

5. How does your system recommend that you use this framework? How do you actually use it?

6. Compare your responses to this task with the implications for assessment of a sociocultural view of learning. What do you notice? How would you characterise the difference?

7. What are the implications of this analysis for your own assessment practices? How do you reconcile any tensions that there might be between assessment for learning and assessment of learning?

The processes of formative assessment

(From: Torrance, H. & Pryor, J. (1998) *Investigating formative assessment*. Buckingham. Open University Press, pp.160–1).

Key: T = Teacher; P = Pupil

	Description	Possible teacher intentions	Possible positive effect for pupil
A	T observes P at work (process)	Gain in understanding of why/how the pupil has approached or achieved task	Enhanced motivation due to T's attention
B	T examines work done (product)	Gain in understanding of what P has done	Enhanced motivation due to T's attention
C	T asks principled question (seeks to elicit evidence of what P knows, understands, or can do); P responds	Insight into P's knowledge, understanding, or skills	Rehearsal of knowledge, understanding or skills; articulation of understanding to realize understanding
D	T asks for clarification about what has been done, is being done, or will be done; P replies	Gain in understanding of what P has done and of P's understanding of the task	Re-articulation of understanding; enhanced self-awareness and skills of summary, reflection, prediction, speculation
E	T questions P about how and why specific action has been taken (meta-process and metacognitive questioning; P responds	Gain in understanding of why/how the pupil has approached or achieved task. Promotion of deepened understanding and 'handover'	Articulation of thinking-about-thinking; deepened understanding and 'handover'
F	T communicates task criteria (what has to be done in order to complete the task) or negotiates them with P	Communicating goals and success criteria; ensuring work is on target; adjusting pace of work	Understanding of task and principles behind it
G	T communicates with quality criteria or negotiates them with P	Enhancement of quality of future work; promotion of greater independence	Understanding of notions of quality to aid future self-monitoring
H	T critiques a particular aspect of the work or invites P to do so	Enhancement of quality of future work; promotion of greater independence	Articulating and interrogating quality criteria; enhanced understanding of quality issues; practice in self-monitoring
J	T supplies information, corrects, or makes a counter-suggestion	Communication of alternative or more acceptable product	Enhancement of knowledge and/or understanding
K	T gives and/or discusses evaluative feedback on work done with respect to: task, and/or effort and/or aptitude, ability (possibly with reference to future or past achievement)	Influence on P's attributions and therefore motivation of P for further work	Enhanced motivation and self-worth when realized in a context of empowerment; development of learning goals
L	T suggests or negotiates with P what to do next	Insight into ways forward for immediate further teaching of individual; refocusing P on curricular goals	Insight into ways to continue working and learning. Deepening of understanding of process/principle
M	T suggest or negotiates with P what to do next time	Insight into ways forward for planning of group activities	Deepening of understanding of principle/process
N	T assigns mark, grade, or summary judgment on the quality of this piece of work or negotiates an agreed one with P	Information for summative assessment; communication of quality criteria; teaching/modelling skills of assessment for self-assessment	Information about present achievement with respect to longer term goals
P	T rewards or punishes pupil, or demonstrates approval/disapproval	Improvement or maintenance of relationship with pupil; enhancement of motivation	Enhanced motivation