

# MODULE 5

## 5.2 - UNDERSTANDING ASSESSMENT IN TBLT

Before we start analysing assessment in TBLT we should ask ourselves a couple of essential questions: What is assessment? Why do we assess learners? And what is the difference between assessment and evaluation?

Let's start from the beginning, assessment in language education refers to the systematic process of evaluating and measuring collected data and information on **students' language knowledge**, understanding, and ability in order to improve their language learning and development (Coombe: 2018).

At the same time, assessment is used to measure **individual performance on a given task** in order to understand learners' skills. Such assessment can take different forms (tests, quizzes, interviews, texts, portfolios, etc.).

Therefore we assess learners so as to understand better their learning process, as well as to evaluate the **quality of our teaching**.

Paraphrasing Norris, we may say that assessment is similar to storytelling, as we seek to reconstruct and understand better learners' profile based on the actions they can or cannot perform using language.

Certainly, assessment heavily depends on its intended uses: from informing classroom teaching and learning to improving and ensuring the quality of our didactic choices.

Finally, we will try to distinguish between **evaluation and assessment**. In fact, through evaluation we gather assessment results in order to support learning, teaching and curriculum development.

It is connected to four different levels:

- 1) learner feedback;
- 2) learner learning;
- 3) learning behaviour;
- 4) learning results.

Thus, evaluation informs curricular decision making, providing useful information on several domains. On the other hand, assessment is the procedure aimed at collecting learner data in order to gain insights on learner achievements and performances.

Now, that we have answered our questions we may move on to the next video in which we will give a closer look onto task-based assessment, its history and its main feature.

However, please remember to answer our small quiz, before you get ready for a new chapter!

## References

Coombe, C. (2018) An A to Z of Second Language Assessment: How Language Teachers Understand Assessment Concepts. UK. British Council

Norris, J. (2014, April). How do we assess task-based performance? Invited LARC/CALPER testing and assessment webinar