



MODULE 5

COLLECTING MEANINGFUL DATA FOR ASSESSMENT

Earlier we talked about how to do a needs analysis and establish learning objectives. Now let us look together at **how to collect useful data for assessment and establish criteria for evaluating students**. First, however, let us recall a few things about the teacher's role in task-based assessment.

- Teachers do not correct students' errors during the task;
- Teachers take notes on students' errors during the task;
- Teachers give feedback of their assessment to students during the post-task

How can we collect useful data for evaluation?

Students are not only assessed positively if they are **accurate** (i.e. if they use grammar rules well), but also if they manage to **complete the task** (e.g. if they created a catalogue of films to watch or if the class enjoyed their presentation).

As we have already mentioned, task-based assessment must be as close to real life as possible. For this reason, production tasks such as **case studies, role-plays, project work and simulations are very common activities for evaluation**.

Simulations and **project work** are based on problems that have an **open-ended answer**. Students have to use their **creativity**. Therefore, **simulations and project work are suitable for advanced students**.

In contrast, **case studies** are based on problems that have a **closed answer** (the outcome of the task is 'solved or not solved'), so they are **more suitable for beginner students**.

Other methods include **assessment rubrics, diaries and portfolios**.

Evaluation rubrics are **grids** that allow teachers to **observe an aspect of the class during a lesson or series of lessons**. Some are very complex and also allow observation of interactions between students. They are very useful for collecting data, and for improving teaching and learning.

The **diaries** that students write are excellent for **assessing students' writing skills** and for **evaluating their improvement** during a course.



Finally, there are **portfolios**, which are a **collection of students' personal work** that can be updated as language learning continues. Portfolios are an effective way to **motivate students**, as they give them a fun way to review the language and help them reflect on their course of study. Portfolios are a useful tool to **help students self-assess** their written production and **identify their weaknesses and strengths, organise and collect their learning experiences** and **monitor their improvements**.

What criteria do we use to assess the outcome of a task?

- Try to think of the real world (and language) when students do a task and present a final product;
- Assess linguistic and paralinguistic elements (accuracy, fluency, gestures, non-verbal communication traits), content and other features (such as imagery and effectiveness).

