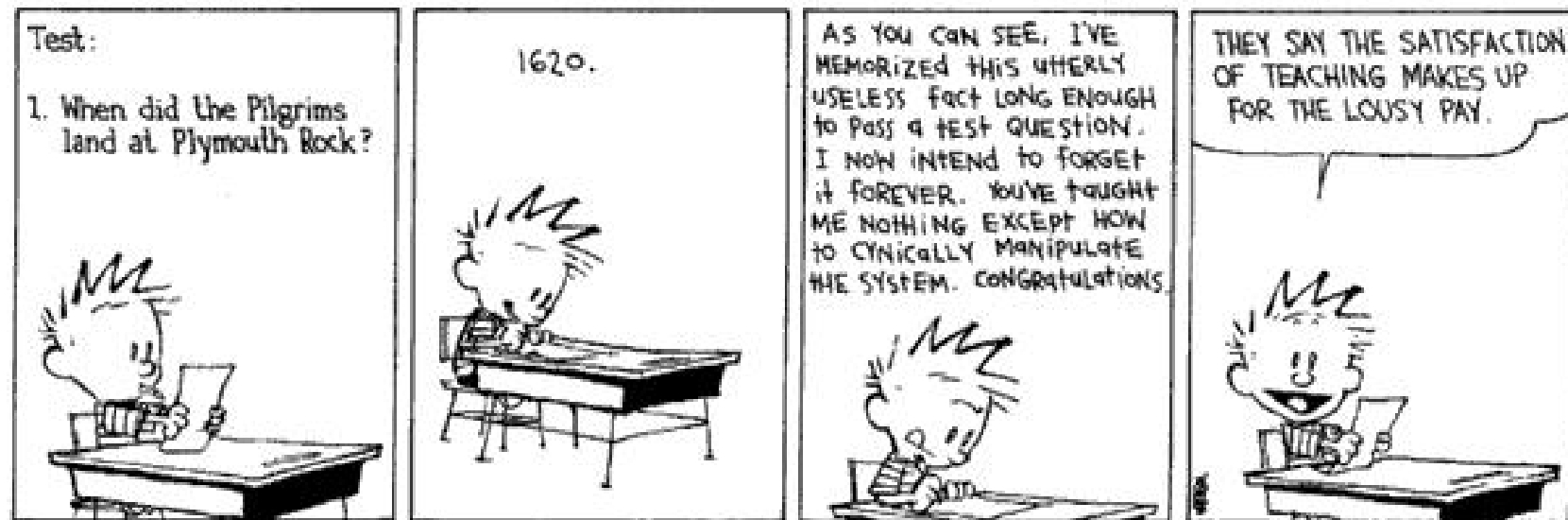
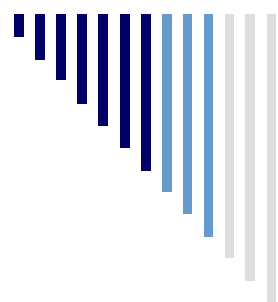


"You've taught me nothing except how to cynically manipulate the system."



How well am I doing?

Pauline Swanton
21/01/2012



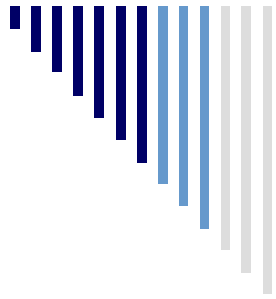
What are we going to do today?

Use your experience to reflect on:

- ☐ the place of assessment in adult language classes.
- ☐ assessment modes, strategies and referencing.
- ☐ evidence based assessment.

and to....

- ☐ share good ideas and practical hints for successful assessment.
 - ☐ evaluate your current assessment practice and plan changes, if necessary!
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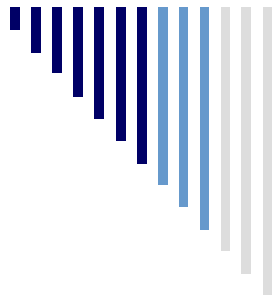
Getting to know you

A straw poll.

Circulate to create a group profile. You need to find out:

- ☐ Which languages are represented in the group.
- ☐ Where people teach. (University? Local authority?)
- ☐ Where participants are from. (Leicester? Yorkshire?)
- ☐ Why people have come along to the session.

Collate the responses you get and be ready to feedback.

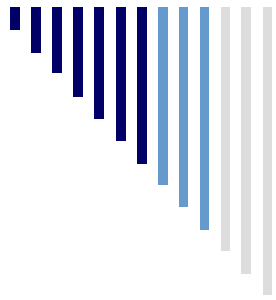


How do you feel about assessment?

Fact: Our own experience of being assessed plays a key role in the development of our assessment repertoire.

Consider the experiences you've had of being assessed (in an educational or other setting, e.g. driving test, job interview). Choose one example of assessment which had a positive effect and one which had a negative effect.

Share these experiences and discuss what made assessments positive or negative .



How do learners feel about assessment?

‘I’d like more constructive criticism from our tutor. She just says ‘great’ all the time.’

Meaningless judgements don’t support progress.

‘Our ‘Introduction to Italian’ tutor refuses to assess us. He says if we did badly we’d lose interest. But all of us want to know how we’re doing.’

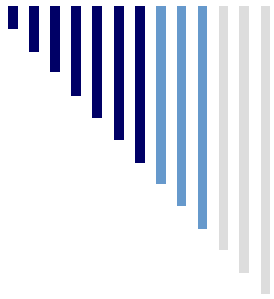
Tutor has an issue with assessment; learners don’t.

‘We have to write our own assessment of ourselves. I never say I’m good at anything because it sounds like I’m showing off.’

Learners need training to be able to self-assess.

‘We took an exam at the end of the course, so, by the time the teacher discovered I hadn’t understood a lot, it was too late.’

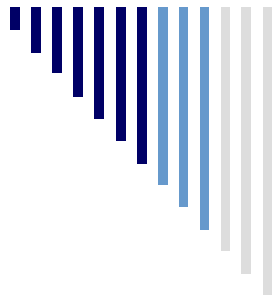
Frequency and regularity are important assessment considerations.



Learners want relevant and effective assessment.

Teachers need to know how to provide it.

Assessment strategies should be **VALID**
and **RELIABLE**.

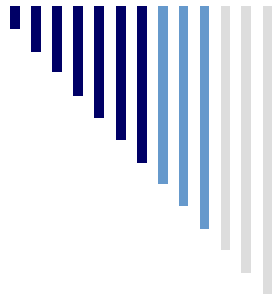


Valid assessment strategies

....test whether the aims and objectives of a learning experience have been achieved.

- ☐ A written exam is an **invalid** test of the ability to speak a language.
- ☐ A conversation with a native speaker would be more **valid**.
- ☐ More **valid** still would be the ability to perform a range of oral tasks in a variety of contexts.

How would you rate the validity of role play in testing pronunciation? Is there a more effective tool for testing pronunciation?

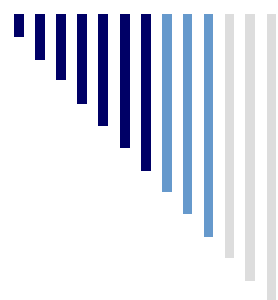


Reliability

Role play is a frequently used language assessment tool but can lead to subjective, unfocussed judgements if not managed, making it UNRELIABLE.

A role play becomes a more reliable assessment method when subject to a detailed marking scheme that covers the skills and abilities it sets out to test.

Effective assessment lies as much in the recording of outcomes as in the application of a 'test'.



What assessment tools and strategies are there?

Written test

Role play and.....

What might you want to assess?

- ☐ Acquisition of grammar and/or vocabulary.
- ☐ Ability to select and apply language appropriately in a conversation.
- ☐ Ability to recognise style, idiom and innuendo.

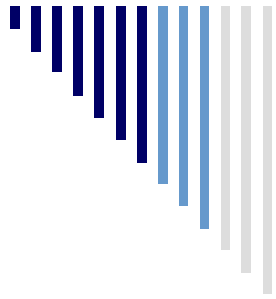
Discuss which assessment strategies might be most valid and what might make them reliable.



Referencing

To judge how effective learning has been we need to compare a performance with something else in order to characterise it.

- ☐ Norm referencing An individual's achievement relative to that of the group of which s/he is a part. (The best at pronunciation)
 - ☐ Criterion referencing An individual performance is measured against objective standards or criteria. ('Can do' statements)
 - ☐ Ipsative referencing Assessment of the individual's present against prior performance (Beats a previous score)
 - ☐ Grade referencing Criteria and levels of achievement relating to them are connected with points on a scale. (Sometimes including a scale of dependence)
-



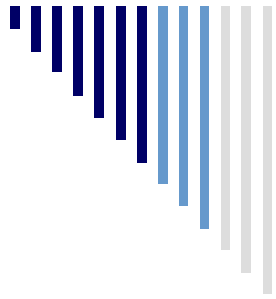
Referencing

Group work

Your choice of referencing depends on what you are assessing.

Does any one referencing choice predominate in adult language learning? Why? Is there one that is hardly used? Why?

Come up with one example of an assessment task from your group that clearly demonstrates referencing in action.



Modes of assessment

Formal; informal.

Initial; diagnostic; formative; summative.

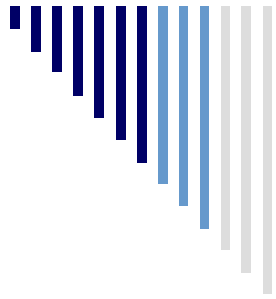
Continuous; terminal.

Internal; external.

Process; product.

With a partner:

Analyse the assessments that you undertake with your group/s. What 'modes' can you identify? Are there modes that you don't apply? Why not? Be prepared to give examples of assessment tasks that correspond to different modes!



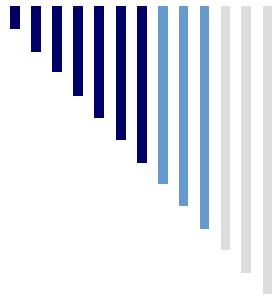
Evidence based assessment...

...is linked to learning outcomes expressed as competences (or 'can do' statements).

Performance criteria are spelled out; performance assessed against these criteria.

Language examples:

- ☐ Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
- ☐ Languages Ladder
- ☐ Asset languages



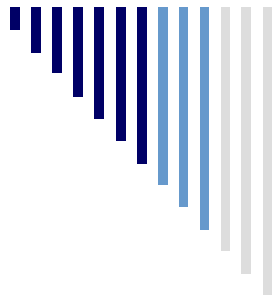
Competence based assessment task

Half the group will be undertaking an information gap assessment task the other half will be assessing their performance.

The assessors should check up on at least 3 of the conversations taking place, gather evidence and record their assessment on the tutor checklist.

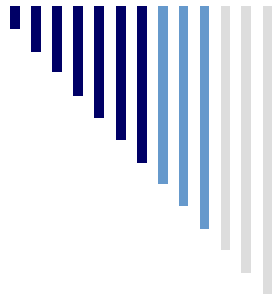
Once you have completed the task:

- ☐ Form small groups (assessors + assessed).
 - ☐ Analyse the experience from the learner's and teacher's viewpoint.
 - ☐ Using the evidence you've collected, decide how valid and reliable the assessment was.
 - ☐ List the positive and negative features of this assessment.
-



Competence based assessment task

Competence to be assessed	Obtaining the information necessary to make a journey by train
Performance criteria	Learners should demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- ascertain arrival/departure times- ascertain the fare- obtain any other specific information necessary for the journey
Evidence	Tutor checklist A's completed exercise



Concerns about competence based assessment

- ❑ You can't distinguish between levels of performance. Competences can't be graded; you are either competent or not.
 - ❑ Competence based assessment focuses on behavioural rather than cognitive aspects of learning. It can demonstrate the acquisition of a skill but not the knowledge underpinning that acquisition
 - ❑ The interpretation of performance criteria can vary from assessor to assessor.
 - ❑ A competence based system can make learning assessment-led. Courses are developed around competences that need to be ticked off.
-



The Languages Ladder

A preliminary competence

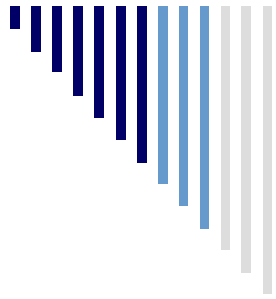
I can understand the main points and some of the detail from a spoken passage made up of familiar language in simple sentences.

Individual work:

What does this statement mean? What do you think constitutes 'familiar language'? What does a 'simple sentence' look like? Share your findings with the group.

In the group devise an assessment strategy for this competence. What tasks will you give to learners to provide sufficient evidence of their success?

Remember the 'concerns' about competence based assessment and address them in your strategy.

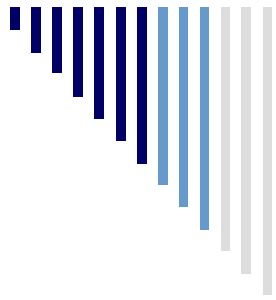


And finally...

Don't mix up ***assessment*** and ***evaluation***.

Assessment refers to information and judgements about individuals' learning.

Evaluation refers to information and judgements about course effectiveness.



Next steps

- Spend some time thinking about your own assessment practice. How good is it? Do learners really know how well they are doing and what they need to work more on? Are there any skills or elements of knowledge and understanding that you never (or infrequently) assess?
- Come up with one action that you will take in the next 10 days to improve your assessment practice. write it down and check on Tuesday, 31st January that you have done it.
- Join ALL; come to the next AE seminar on Saturday 10th March; sign up for Language World 29th – 31st March.

www.all-languages.org.uk