

TeachingEnglish

Matching the right assessment tools with learner needs

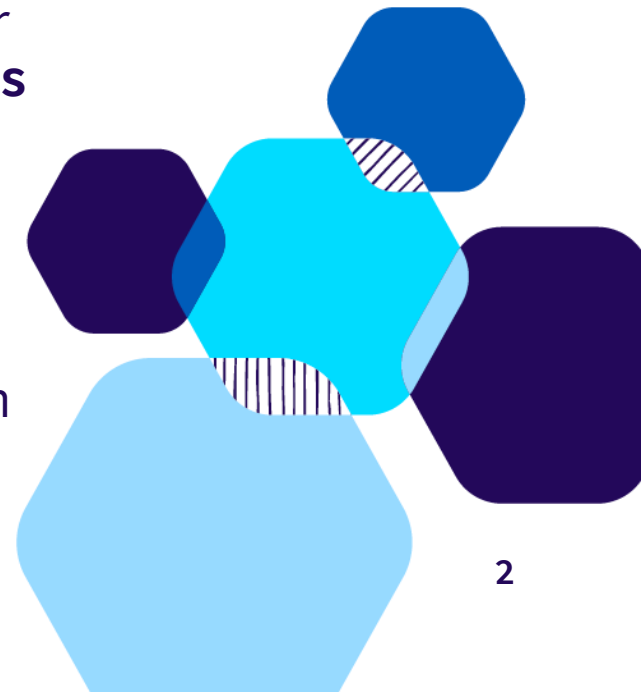
Abel Ochika

Saturday 26 April 2025



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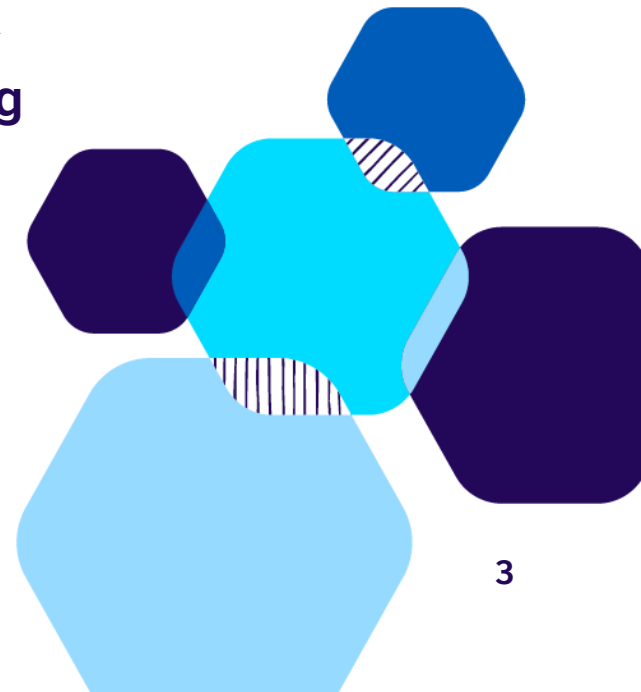
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About the speaker

Abel E. Ochika, M.A. English Language, has over 15 years' experience as a teacher of English language and teacher trainer in Nigeria. He is now a consultant for the British Council in SSA, and often presents at local and international academic conferences. His research interests are in TESOL, Digital Communication, Critical Discourse Analysis, Applied Linguistics, and Project-based Learning. He's passionate about inspiring teachers to be responsible for quality education by taking professional development more seriously.



Aim and Objectives

Aim: To help teachers align assessment tools with learning objectives and learner profiles for more effective and inclusive instruction.

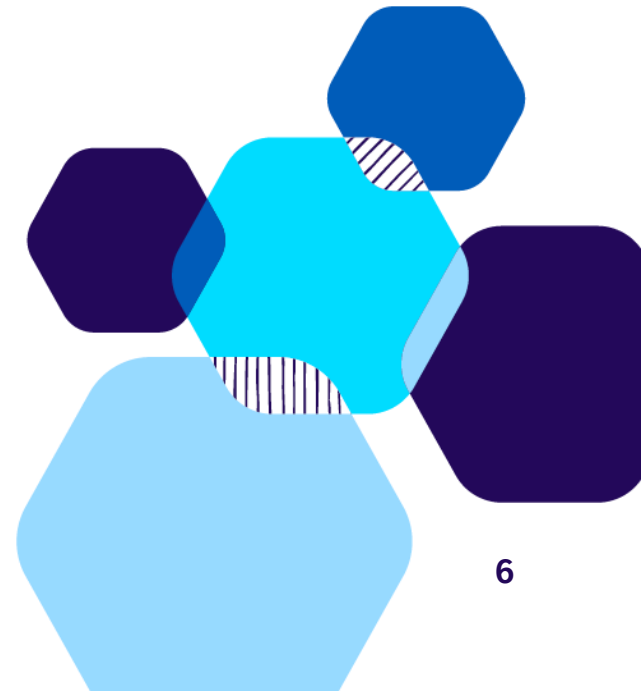
Objectives

- Understand how to align learning objectives with assessment tools
- Apply diverse tools to improve engagement and learning outcomes
- Explore different learner needs

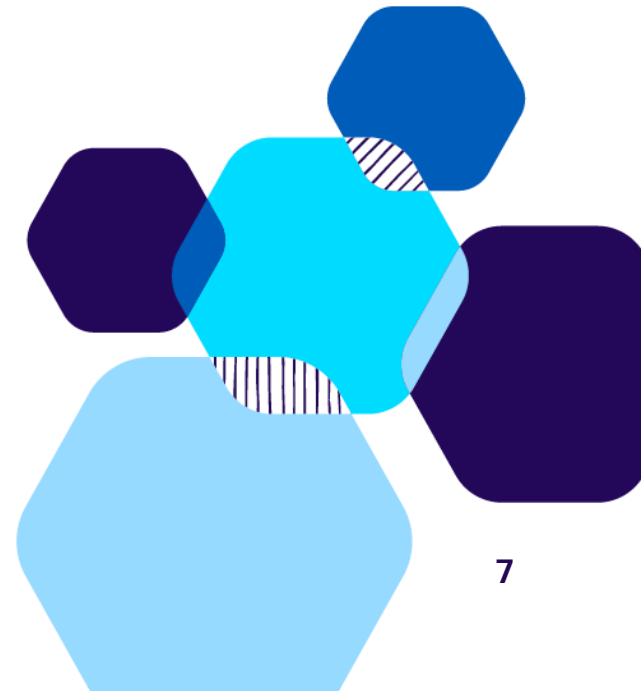
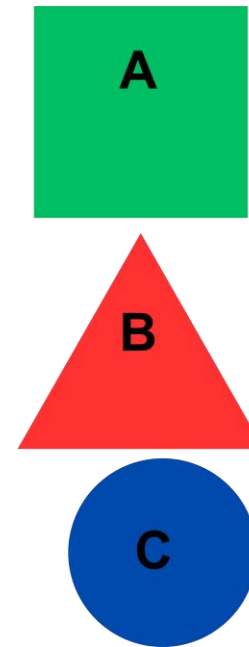
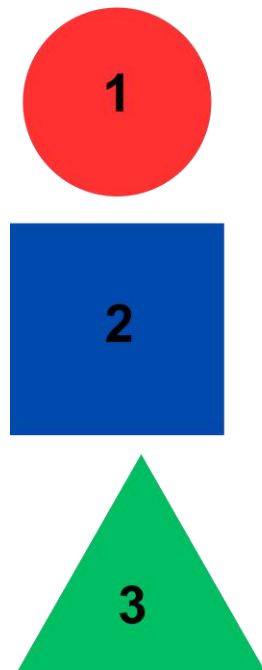
Warm up!

Positive Energy

**Type in the chat a
positive adjective that
begins with the same
alphabet as your name**



Match these items



Concepts clarification

Learning Objectives

Clear statements describing what **learners** should know or be able to do after instruction.

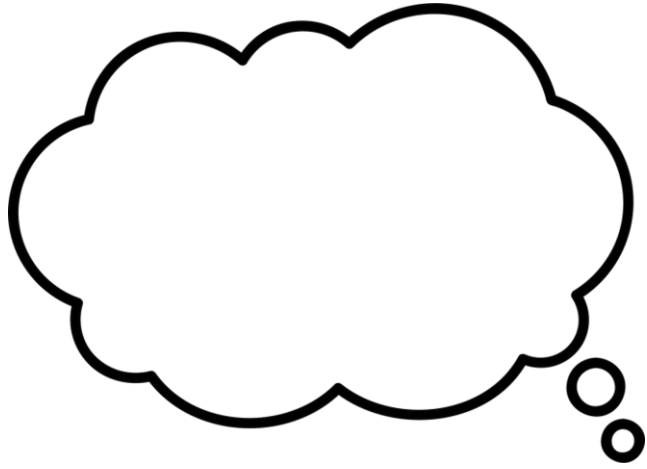
Instruments or techniques used to evaluate student learning (for example - quizzes, essays, presentations, performance tasks, and so on)

Assessment Tools

Learner needs

the specific **knowledge, skills, attitudes**, and support that students require to **successfully achieve learning goals**.

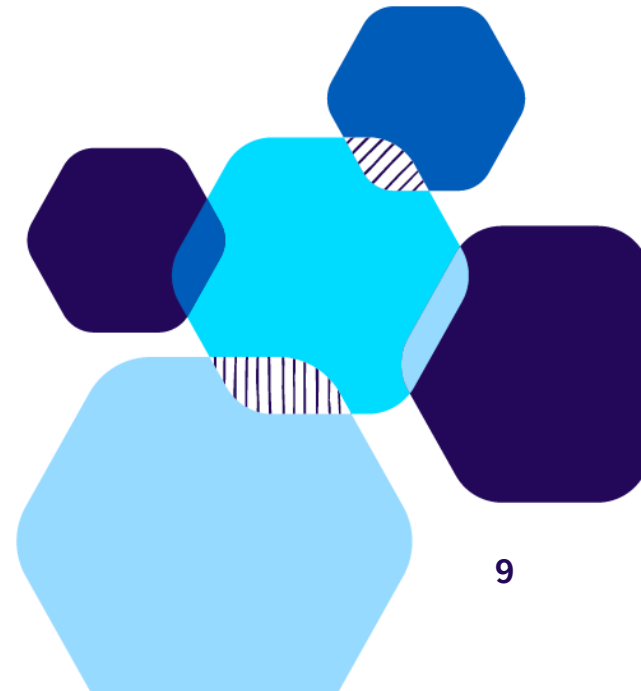
Why assessment matters



“You cannot **manage
what you cannot
measure.”**

Consider this Management maxim in light of a lesson objective and your learners' needs.

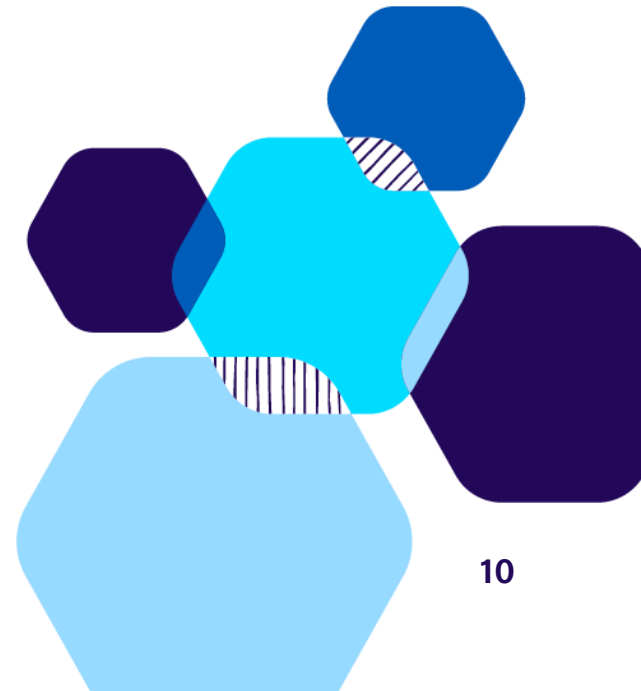
Type in the chat what you think



Why assessment matters

Assessment is a vital component of the teaching and learning process.

Proper alignment of assessment to learner needs and objective(s) of the lesson ensures that assessments accurately measure what students are expected to learn.



Why assessment matters

Not just about
measuring
learning—it's
about shaping it

Assessment
influences
motivation,
engagement,
and progress

The right assessment tool = deepens learning + gives better outcomes

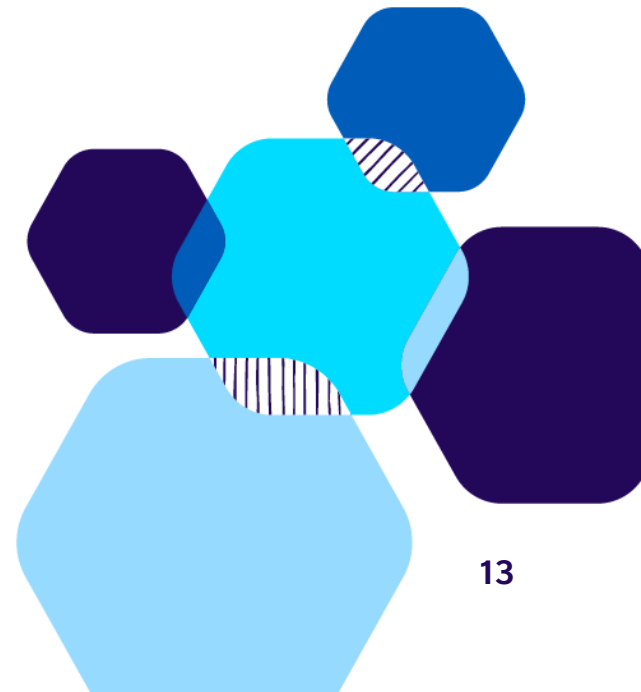
Types of Assessment

**Formative
Assessment
(Assessment for
Learning)**
Ongoing,
diagnostic
(E.g., quizzes, peer
reviews)

**Summative
Assessment
(Assessment of
Learning)**
Evaluative, end-of-
unit (E.g., final tests,
projects)

What types of assessments do you currently use most often?

Answer in the poll



Aligning Assessments with Learning Outcomes

Recall
Quizzes,
MCQs

Analyse
Case studies

Create
Projects,
Presentations

As a rule, use standard objective questions (e.g., multiple-choice, T/F, fill-in-the-blank, and matching) for frequent, low-stakes quizzes to test for less complex learning outcomes, such as **identify**, **define**, and **recognise**.

For higher-order thinking, such as **compare/contrast**, **apply**, and **predict**, use essay or other open-ended questions, or even papers or projects.

The Bloom's Taxonomy

Remember: choose, define, find, how, label, list, match, name, select, tell, state and so on.

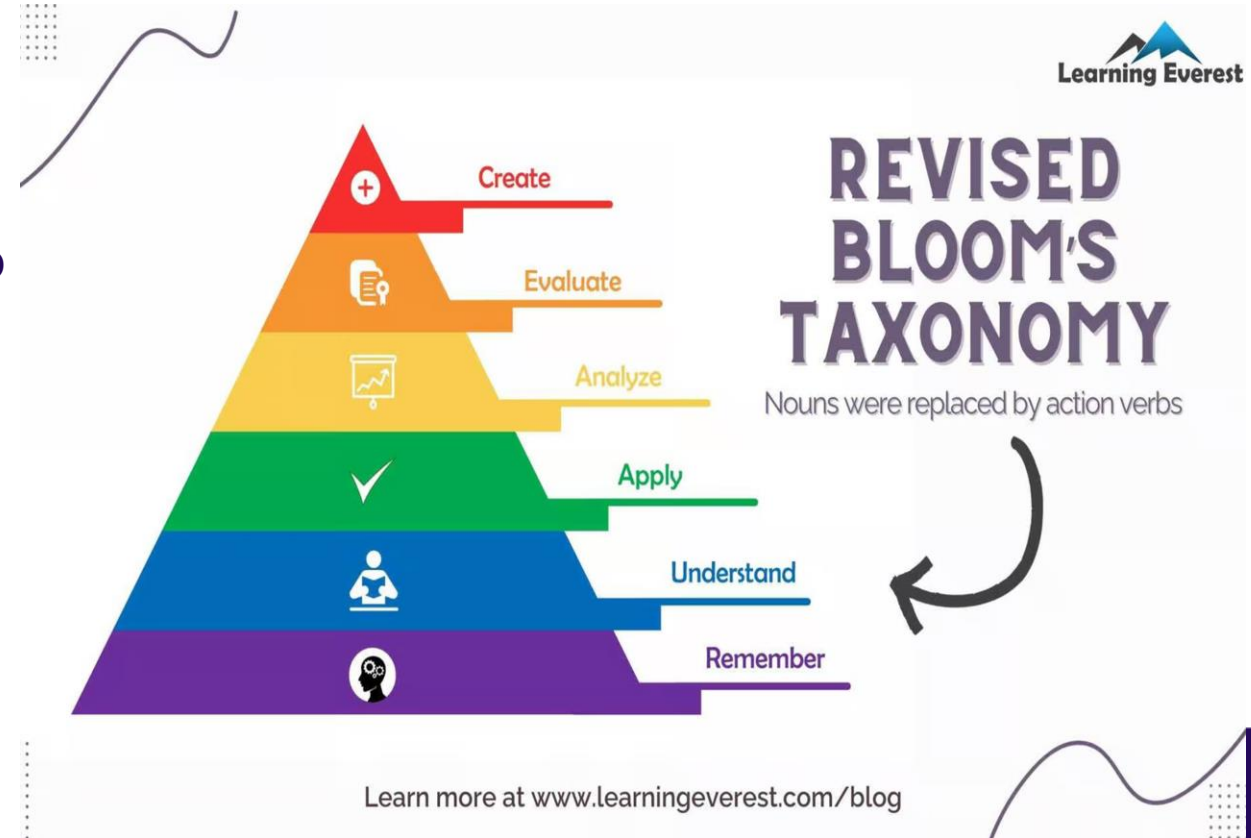
Understand: compare, demonstrate, explain, illustrate, interpret, outline, summarize, translate and so on.

Apply: build, construct, develop, identify, organise, plan arrange

Analyse: analysis, categorise, discover, examine, inspect and so on.

Evaluate: choose, criticise, evaluate, interpret, explain

Create: Adapt, change, combine, compose, design, modify



R U A A E C

Let's see what you can remember

Reorder these components of the Bloom's Taxonomy and match each with their corresponding verbs

1. Remember

2. Analyse

3. Understand

4. Evaluate

5. Apply

6. Create

A. Explain

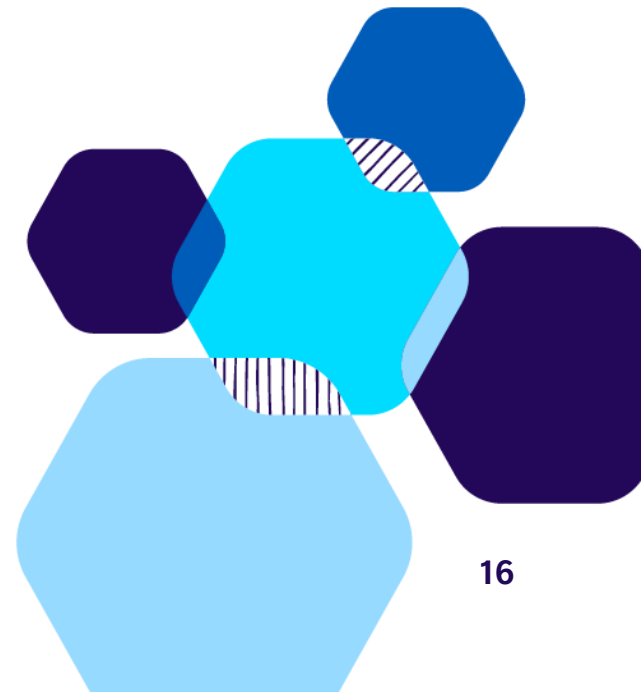
B. List

C. Summarise

D. Modify

E. Categorise

F. Arrange



Answers

R **U** **1B**
2E
A **A** **3C**
4A
E **C** **5F**
6D

1. Remember B. List
3. Understand C. Summarise
5. Apply F. Arrange
2. Analyze E. Categorise
4. Evaluate A. Explain
6. Create D. Modify

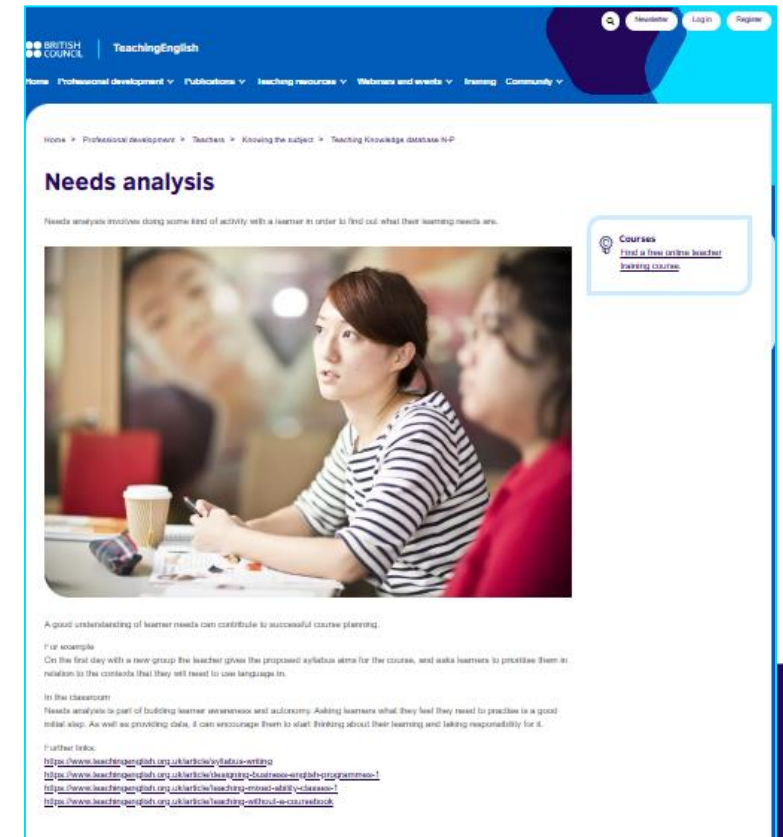
Aligning assessment with lesson outcomes and learner needs

- Ensures validity
- Promotes equity and fairness

How do you know the needs of your learners?

“Needs analysis involves doing some kind of activity with a learner in order to find out what their learning needs are.”

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/knowing-subject/n-p/needs-analysis>



Representative excerpts from the assessment of my learners' needs

Learners engaged in three collaborative tasks: introducing themselves to a partner, discussing their expectations for the course, and documenting their partner's responses. Subsequently, they exchanged written records to verify the accuracy of the reported information.

① Duase Hadiza
② in order to communicate with people effectively while speaking English.

2 my partner said he is here to learn and communicate well in good English, writing, spelling and learning proper grammar.

② *She said she is here to learn.
* ~~to learn~~ To understand and speak a good English.
* To acquire more knowledge and be a better person in the society.

Ans (i) For easy communication
(ii) To acquire more knowledge for a better life
(iii) For skill development and solving critical thinking communication.

Reflections on the needs assessment exercise

Through this activity, I gained deeper insight into my students' proficiency levels and uncovered immediate and important talking points—spelling and grammatical errors, as well as hidden learning needs they hadn't recognized themselves. The task also encouraged them to engage key 21st-century skills: they collaborated with peers, communicated their thoughts clearly, thought critically about their expectations, and creatively expressed their ideas. Beyond informing the course content, the needs assessment helped me develop a more critical understanding of my learners and how to tailor my support to meet their specific context and needs.

Understanding learners through NLP Submodalities

In Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), Richard Bandler describes submodalities as the finer components of our five senses (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.)—how we internally represent experiences. For example, a visual image might be bright or dim, near or far; a sound might be loud or soft, fast or slow.

Common Submodalities

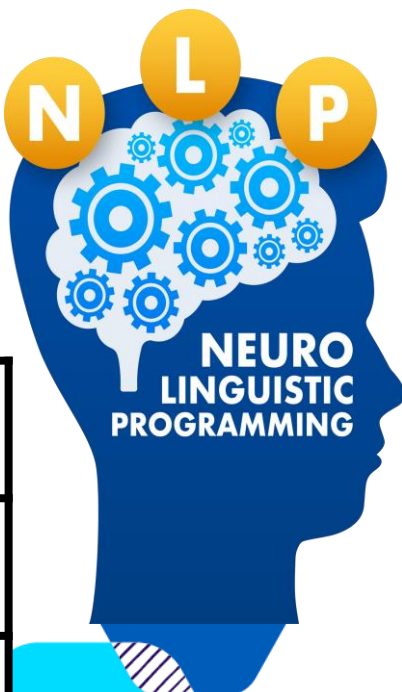
Visual: Bright/dim, color/black & white, near/far

Auditory: Loud/soft, fast/slow, clear/muffled

Kinesthetic: Warm/cool, heavy/light, tense/relaxed

Examples of how submodalities can be triggered with textual cues.

Submodality	Triggered by Textual Cues Like...
Visual	Descriptive adjectives, color words, spatial references
Auditory	Onomatopoeia, rhythm, sound descriptors, inner dialogue
Kinesthetic	Sensory verbs, emotional or physical states, movement words



Examples of applying Submodalities

Visual Submodalities in Text

Use descriptive words that trigger mental images and spatial awareness:

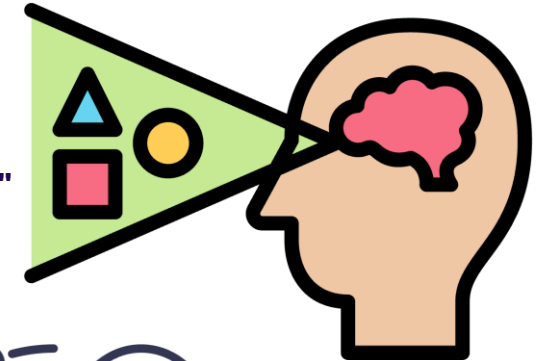
Examples:

"Imagine a bright red apple sitting in the center of a white table."

"Write a paragraph describing a place you love. Include colors, shapes, and what you see around you."

"Underline the key points in blue, circle the main idea in green."

Purpose: Activates the mental "movie screen" and helps visual learners process the scene vividly.



Auditory Submodalities in Text

Use onomatopoeia, rhythm, and instructions that involve sound:

Examples:

"Describe the sound of heavy rain hitting a tin roof."

"Listen to this sentence in your head—does it sound smooth or choppy?"

"Read your dialogue aloud. Does it flow naturally?"

Purpose: Helps auditory learners internalize rhythm, tone, and phonological awareness.



Kinesthetic Submodalities in Text

Use language that evokes sensation, texture, or movement:

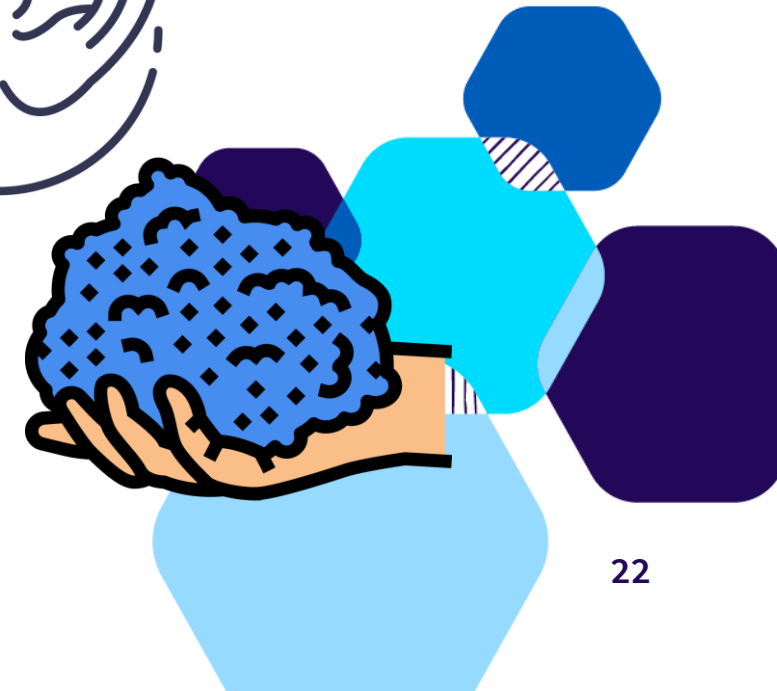
Examples:

"Describe how it feels to walk barefoot on warm sand."

"Act out the dialogue, then write it down from memory."

"Write about an experience that made your heart race or hands sweat."

Purpose: Connects language with physical feeling or bodily experience—ideal for kinesthetic learners.



Submodalities in relation to learner needs

Understanding submodalities helps tailor instruction to how learners best process information:

- Visual learners may need diagrams, color-coded notes, or visual storytelling.
- Auditory learners benefit from discussions, lectures, and rhythmic repetition.
- Kinesthetic learners thrive with hands-on tasks, movement, or physical interaction with learning materials.

By identifying learners' preferred submodalities, educators can adapt materials and delivery styles to meet cognitive and sensory needs, enhancing engagement and retention.



Understanding Differentiation

Rachael Roberts discusses the rationale for teachers to differentiate learning in our classes:

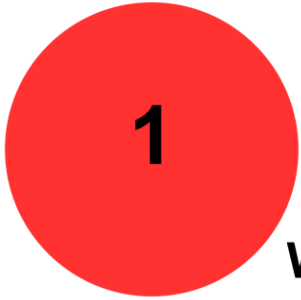
- get to know all the differences and strengths of their learners.
- encourage a 'growth mindset' in all groups; mistakes can help us learn.
- use pair and group work to encourage differentiation-friendly learning.
- get more and better answers to all questions in teacher-led activities.
- make changes to reading or listening tasks to add challenge or support.
- plan for and encourage learners to speak and write at different levels.



<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/understanding-my-professional-identity/english-teaching-talks-5>

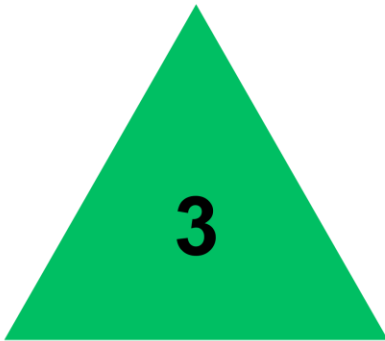
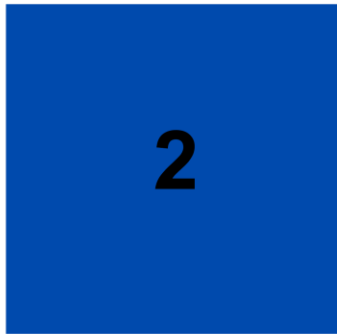
Types of learning objectives and matching assessments

Learning Domain	Objective Example	Suitable Assessment
Cognitive (Knowledge)	identify	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MCQ• Quizzes
Affective (Attitude)	Demonstrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-reflection• Peer assessment
Psychomotor (Skill)	Perform	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation check• Practical test



Remember our first
slide?

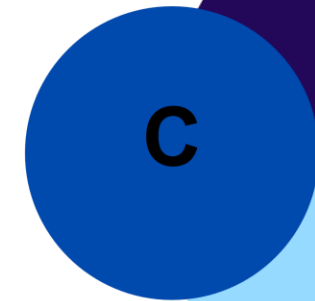
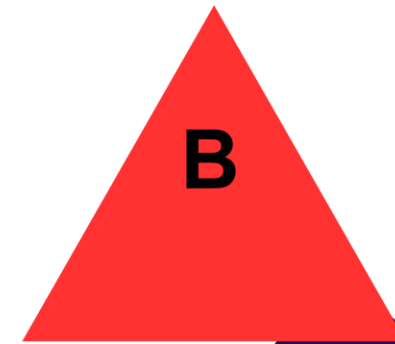
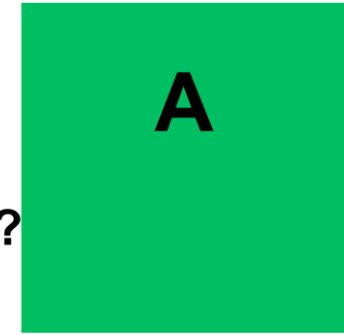
What do you think about this matching items?
Accurate, Fair, or Wrong



1BC

2AC

3AB



Learning Contexts

- **Learner profiles:** language level, preferences, goals, age, background, gender, interest, special educational needs, level of autonomy
- **Classroom setting:** online, face-to-face, blended
- **Learning objectives:** skills vs knowledge vs attitude
- **Cultural/contextual factors:** gender roles, religion

Levels of Language learners

Lower-Level Language Learners (e.g., A1–B1 on CEFR)

Proficiency: Limited vocabulary and grammar; basic understanding of everyday expressions.

Focus: Listening and speaking for survival or routine tasks; simple reading and writing.

Skills Development: Need help with sentence construction, pronunciation, comprehension of short texts, and guided writing.

Support Needs: High scaffolding, visual aids, repetition, and explicit instruction.

Interaction: Prefer structured dialogues and guided practice.

Errors: Frequent, and often interfere with communication.

Higher-Level Language Learners (e.g., B2–C2 on CEFR)

Proficiency: Broad vocabulary and grammar range; can express complex ideas and understand nuanced meaning.

Focus: Academic or professional communication, fluency, accuracy, and style.

Skills Development: Refining fluency, argumentation, idiomatic usage, genre-specific writing, and critical reading.

Support Needs: Less scaffolding; benefit from feedback, peer interaction, and authentic tasks.

Interaction: Comfortable with debates, presentations, and writing research papers.

Errors: Less frequent, more subtle, and often tied to style or register.

Selecting assessment tools using a decision-making matrix

A decision-making matrix helps you objectively evaluate and choose the best assessment tool by scoring or ranking options against factors that matter most in your context.

How It Works!

- List Your Assessment Options
(e.g., quiz, group project, oral presentation, portfolio)
- Identify Key Criteria
Based on your context, common criteria might include:
 - i. Learner engagement
 - ii. Time required to prepare/mark
 - iii. Alignment with learning objectives
 - iv. Suitability for learners' language level
 - v. Feedback opportunities
- Rate Each Tool
Use a scale (e.g., 1–5) to rate how well each tool meets each criterion.
- Total the Scores
The tool with the highest total score is likely the most appropriate choice.

Example of a decision-making matrix

Tool	Engagement	Time-Friendly	Objective Alignment	Feedback Potential	Total
Quiz	3	5	4	2	14
Group Project	5	2	5	4	16
Oral Presentation	4	3	4	5	16
Portfolio	4	2	5	5	16

How the knowledge of submodalities can enhance assessment styles in language learning

1. Visual Submodality Learners

Preferences: Images, layout, spatial relationships, color

Assessment Styles: Picture-based vocabulary tests, Mind maps or graphic organizers, Reading comprehension with visual cues (charts, infographics) and Writing tasks using visual prompts (photos, scenes)

Why?: These learners recall better when information is presented visually. Assessment should engage visual memory and spatial understanding.

How the knowledge of submodalities can enhance assessment styles in language learning

2. Auditory Submodality Learners

Preferences: Tone, rhythm, sound clarity, volume

Assessment Styles: Listening comprehension tasks, Oral presentations or recorded responses, Dictation and repeat-after-me exercises, Assessing pronunciation or intonation

Why?: These learners process and express information best through sound, so assessments should capture their auditory strengths.

How the knowledge of submodalities can enhance assessment styles in language learning

👐 3. Kinesthetic Submodality Learners

Preferences: Touch, movement, physical sensations

Assessment Styles: Role-plays and simulations, Language games involving physical activity, Real-world tasks (e.g., giving directions physically), Portfolio assessments with interactive components

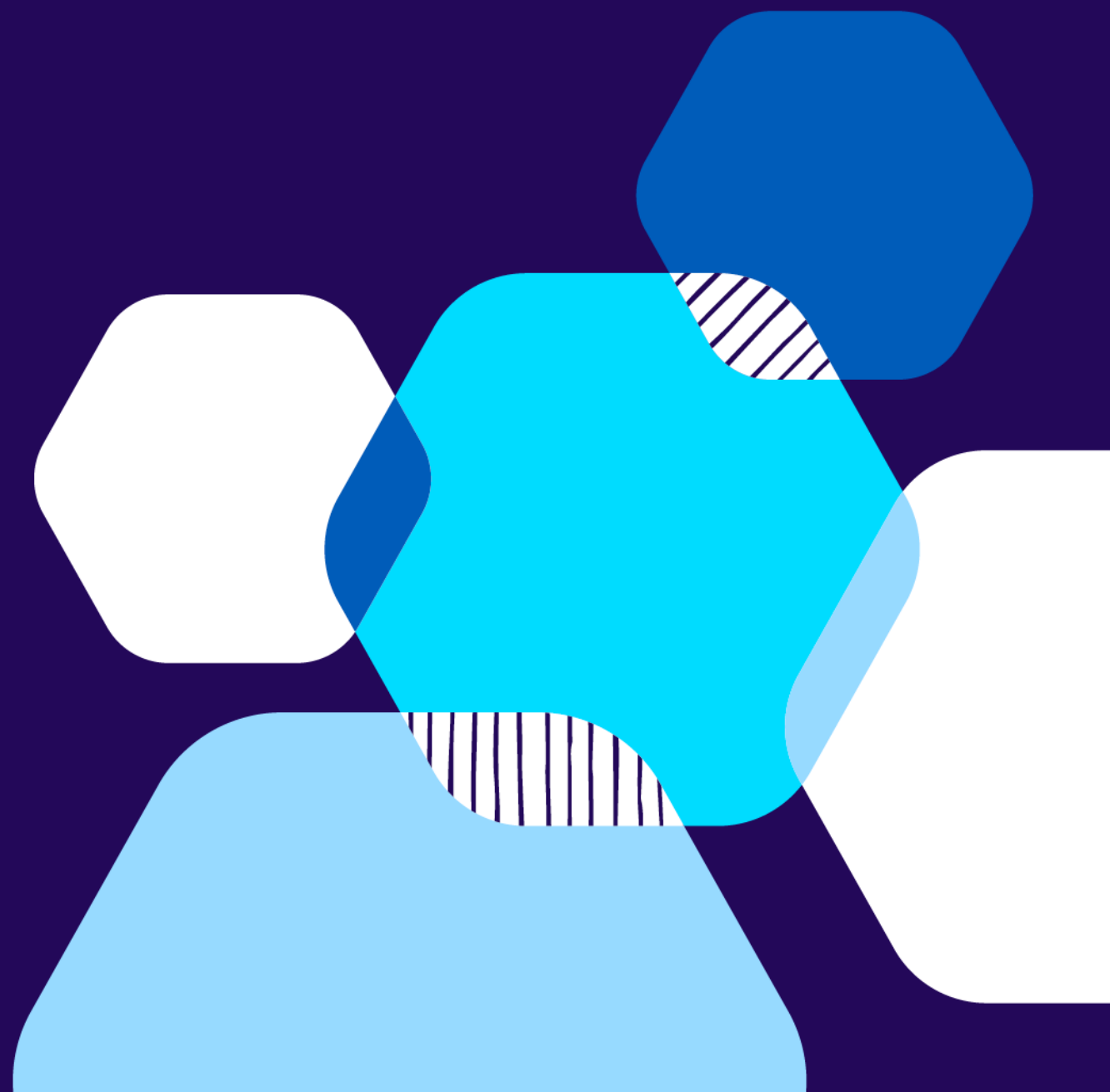
Why?: Movement and tactile interaction help them demonstrate understanding more authentically than static, written tests.

Key takeaways

Learner-centred assessment means designing tasks that align with how students experience and process the world. The essence of assessment is to help shape the learning process. Incorporating diverse assessment strategies, NLP submodalities and decision-making matrix allows you to:

- Diversify assessments
- Know your learners better
- Honour learning preferences
- Improve accuracy in measuring language competence
- Support and Challenge learners in just the right ways

Thank you
Any questions?

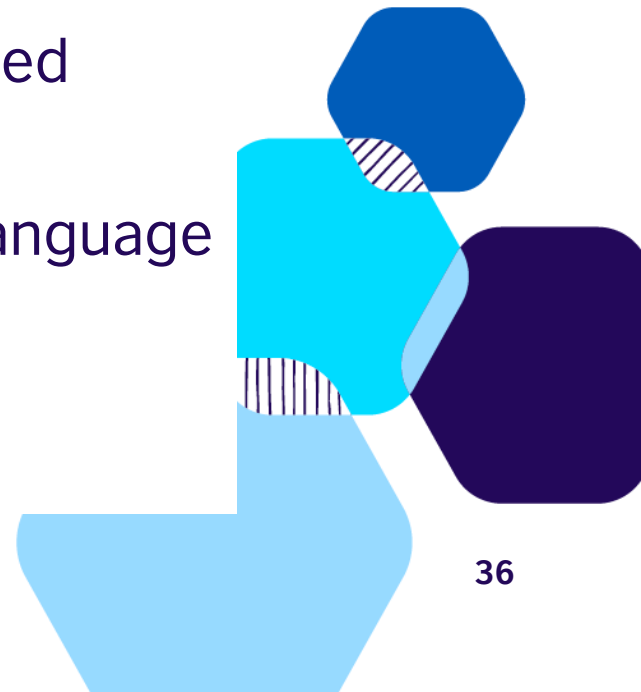


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