General Guidelines for developing assessments

Good assessments correspond to well-written learning objectives. The following list\(^1\) shows how early in the instructional process they should be designed:

1) Identify learning objectives;
2) **Design and build assessments**;
3) Design and build content and activities;
4) Conduct formative evaluation;
5) Revise assessments, contents, and activities;
6) Complete development;
7) Conduct summative evaluation;
8) Maintain the course.

**Design and build assessments**

- **Assessment methods**: after having determined key learning objectives, it is necessary to identify which type of assessment is appropriate to determine the level of knowledge/ performance achieved as a result of the learning activity.

  o If the objective is a knowledge objective which calls for recalling or selecting, test items can be used. Below is a list\(^1\) based on Bloom’s Taxonomy matching cognitive objectives with appropriate test assessments:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Domain (levels)</th>
<th>Examples of test assessments</th>
<th>Key verbs to describe the activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Knowledge (recall information)</td>
<td>multiple-choice test, recount facts or statistics, recall a process, rules, definitions</td>
<td>arrange, define, describe, label, list, memorise, recognise, relate, reproduce, select, state</td>
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<td>2-Comprehension (recall and interpretation of information)</td>
<td>explain or interpret meaning from a given scenario, suggest reaction or solution to a given problem</td>
<td>explain, reiterate, reword, critique, classify, summarise, illustrate, translate, review, report, discuss, re-write, estimate, interpret, theorise, paraphrase, reference, example</td>
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<td>3-Application (use abstract information in concrete situations)</td>
<td>put a theory into practical effect, demonstrate, solve a problem, manage an activity</td>
<td>use, apply, discover, manage, execute, solve, produce, implement, construct, change, prepare, conduct, perform, react, respond, role-play</td>
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<td>4-Analysis (divide information into constituent parts)</td>
<td>identify constituent parts and functions of a process, making qualitative relationships; measure requirements or needs</td>
<td>analyse, break down, catalogue, compare, quantify, measure, test, examine, experiment, relate, graph, diagram, plot, extrapolate, value, divide</td>
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<td>5-Synthesis (build a structure or pattern from many disorganized elements)</td>
<td>develop plans or procedures, design solutions, integrate methods, resources, ideas, parts; create teams or new approaches, write protocols or contingencies</td>
<td>develop, plan, build, create, design, organise, revise, formulate, propose, establish, assemble, integrate, re-arrange, modify</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-Evaluation</td>
<td>review strategic options or plans in terms of efficacy, return on investment or cost-effectiveness, practicability; assess sustainability; perform a SWOT analysis in relation to alternatives; produce a financial justification for a proposition or venture, calculate the effects of a plan or strategy; perform a detailed analysis with recommendations and justifications</td>
<td>review, justify, assess, present a case for, defend, report on, investigate, direct, appraise, argue, project-manage</td>
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If the objective calls for performance, learners should be asked to actively demonstrate their knowledge. The goal of **performance assessments** is to test learners in real or realistic situations. In those circumstances, learners need to perform, not merely recall or select information.

- **Assessment plan:** use a table that shows the format in which each learning objective will be assessed and the number of necessary assessments to test the range of conditions presented by learning objectives.

- **Passing Grades:** determine cut-off scores for assessments, for example:
  
  - Common sense cut-off (considering the lowest level of acceptable performance);
  - Percentage of total (identifying a passing grade for the entire assessment and a minimum grade for each learning objective in the task. Typically learners must pass both in order to pass the assessment. This choice is selected when a learning objective is more important than others).

- **Design test or performance assessments.**
  
The five most common test question types are true/false, short answers, fill-in-the blank, matching, and multiple choice questions. Bryan Hopkins, a training consultant with over 20 years of experience in developing effective training programmes, shared a comprehensive article on writing questions for training programmes in the section below. He distinguishes between **formative** and **summative** questions. The former ones help someone test their understanding, while the latter ones check the learner’s overall mastery of a subject.

Some examples of performance assessment are: simulation, games, group projects, individual projects, internships, laboratory problems, probationary work assignments.¹