

# *Asset Languages in the classroom*

## *Using Speaking Assessments*

*In my classroom I find it easy to use teacher assessment tasks in listening, reading and writing, but how can I carry out speaking assessments in lesson time?*

Let's imagine you have a group of 30 beginners in their second term of study. They have started to recognise and use the sounds of the new language, and now you consider they are ready to be assessed for Grade 1 speaking ('I can say/repeat a few words and short simple phrases'). In order to receive a grade award, they need to be successful in two tasks. You are about to introduce some new vocabulary, and so you decide to start with task B.

### *Preparation*

For Grade 1 speaking task B, pairs of learners must accurately repeat two phrases of four to six syllables supported by a visual clue. In the Teacher Assessment Pack, six small black and white pictures are provided as a guide to show how the task works. You can prepare your own phrases and use any pictures, photographs, flashcards or ICT presentations. You could also use real items, such as classroom objects, clothes or food.

The task says that learners should have a copy of the visual, but this is only to make the task more of a game and less threatening. All speaking tasks are adaptable, to be used in the way that suits you and your learners.

Before you begin the assessment, make a column in your mark book headed 'S' (for speaking) 1B. Choose three pairs of learners you feel are ready and highlight their names in the column. There is no need to tell the learners that an assessment is taking place.

## **Conducting the assessment**

Conduct the lesson in the normal way and, when you ask learners to repeat phrases from visuals, give the selected three pairs of learners the opportunity to repeat two phrases of the correct length for the assessment.

When you are satisfied that they have been successful, put the date against their names in your mark book. If they are unsuccessful, they can try again in another lesson.

In the meantime, all members of the class can participate in the activity, repeating words or phrases according to their proficiency. As you listen to their responses, you can identify other pairs of learners ready to take the assessment. These can be assessed in the same low-key way next time.

Learners who have already been successful can still participate in the activity. Without drawing attention to what you are doing, you can ask them to repeat slightly longer phrases suitable for their standard – and they can start to prepare for the next rung of the Languages Ladder.

## **Recognising achievement**

If you are able to assess six learners in each lesson, all the class should have completed the task after five lessons and you will be able to begin work on grade 1 task A.

When learners have completed both speaking tasks, your Accredited Teacher will be able to issue their grade awards. How and when you present the awards – to individuals or the whole class, in public or in private – is up to you, but do make sure you celebrate your learners' success.

## **Benefits of teacher assessment**

Asset Languages teacher assessment is:

- **Motivational** – Grade awards are available for each grade and skill and can be awarded on the spot.
- **Adaptable** – All speaking and writing tasks, and most listening and reading tasks, can be adapted by teachers to support any programme of study.
- **Flexible** – Assessments can be carried out when the teacher considers that learners are ready.

With forward planning and the minimum of preparation, teachers can make the most of these advantages and carry out assessments as part of their classroom routine.