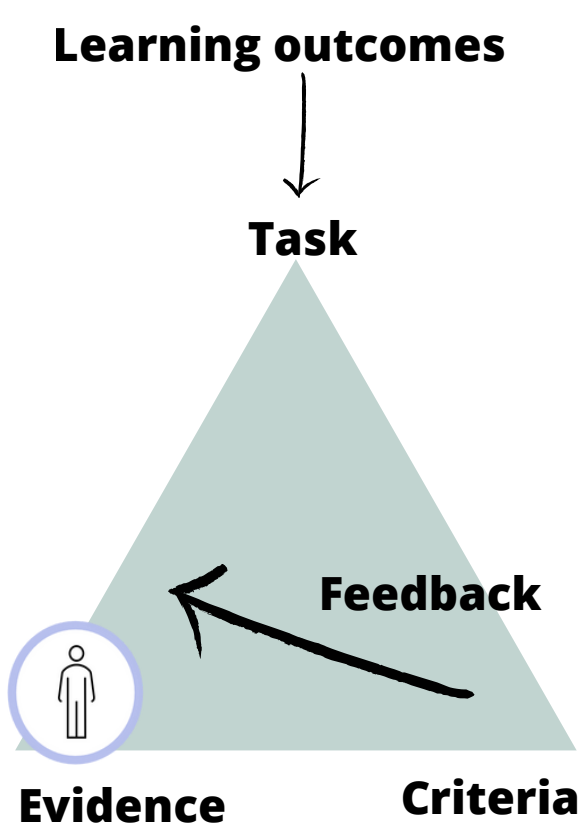


Clear assessment information for students



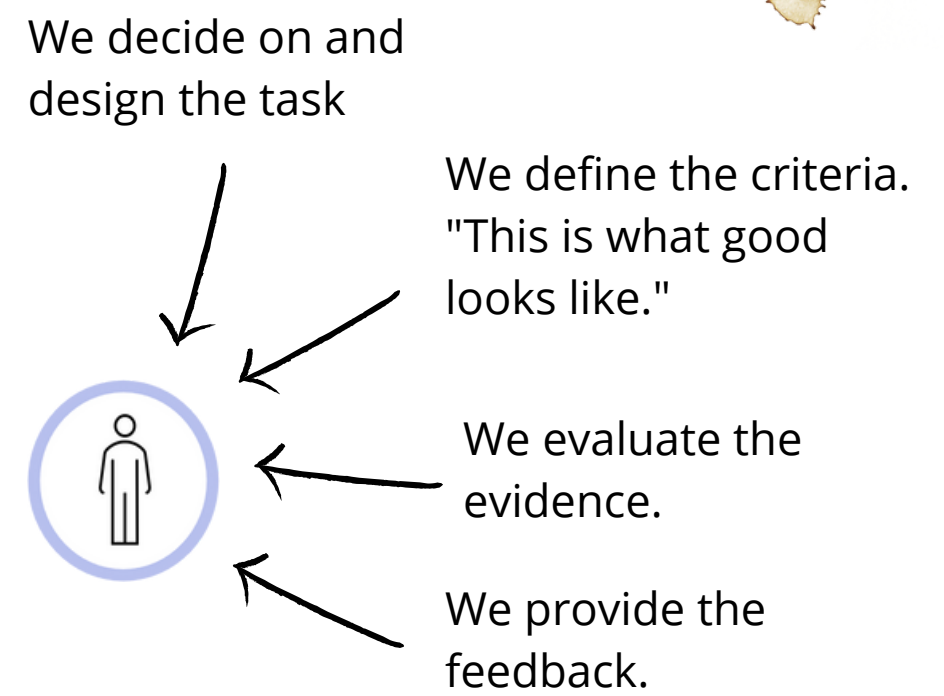
This diagram of the assessment dynamic shows the four main elements of assessment -

- the task,
- the evidence students produce in response to the task,
- the criteria we use to judge the evidence students produce,
- and feedback we give the students

At each point we are answering the following student questions

- What am I meant to be doing?
- How am I being judged?
- How am I doing?
- How do I improve?

Not always, but usually



Given the importance of the information we provide, and the centrality of assessment to student success, it is imperative that we communicate all this information very clearly.

What does clear information look like?

In general

The Assessment Instructions need to be:

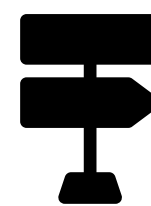
- comprehensive (contain all the guidance that all learners need to complete the assessment successfully), as well as
- comprehensible (written entirely in language that is accessible for all the learners).

Likewise, the Marking Schedule/rubric needs to be

- comprehensive (contain all the guidance that assessors need to make accurate assessment judgments) and
- comprehensible (clear/usable descriptions of quality requirements).

The feedback to learners about their assessment needs to be fit-for-purpose. A plain English explanation of how judgement of the evidence was made is needed so the learner is

1. sufficiently informed to know when applying for reconsideration of the outcome is an appropriate option, and
2. aware of how to do better in subsequent study and assessment.



Signs your information might be confusing....

- Complaints by and negative feedback from learners about unclear Assessment Instructions.
- If you find you're having to provide extra instructions to your learners in class, you need to improve your written instructions (Note: an oral instruction is not an acceptable alternative to written assessment instructions – that raises consistency issues).
- Marking Schedule problems should definitely be picked up in pre-assessment moderation, and if post-assessment moderation reveals inconsistent grading, that is also a strong indication the Marking Schedule is not prescriptive/clear enough.

Specifics things you can do

Detail

Make sure the assessment instructions (due date, LOs being assessed, weighting, word count, submission details) match the information on the course descriptor or other information given to students.

Audience

Write for students - is the language accessible at their level? If you do need to use discipline language, have you defined it? Include a glossary in your rubric to explain what phrases like 'a sophisticated and detailed analysis' actually mean.

Use the link in the box on the right to measure the sophistication of your vocabulary.

Instructions

- break down lengthy assessments into clear, concrete steps.
- use bullet points.
- use short, clear sentences.
- use 'you' to speak directly to students.

Proof read

Get your moderator to proof read carefully and ask them to tell you their understanding of what you want students to do. Unclear information should be picked up in moderation. Allow enough time to do the moderation well.

Mind your language

This is a tool that shows the level of vocabulary you are using. It's based on 3 vocabulary frequency list - the 1000 most commonly used English words (blue), the 2nd thousand (green), an academic word list (yellow) and finally those words that don't appear on those three lists (red). Paste your text into the yellow box on the website and SUBMIT (the results from the Audience paragraph (on the left) are below):

write for students is the language accessible if you do need to use discipline language have you defined it include a glossary in your rubric to explain what phrases like a sophisticated and detailed analysis actually mean

Academic words (yellow) and off list words (red - which may be discipline specific) may need explaining.

Improving summative assessment badge

If you are making changes to your assessment instructions, we encourage you to submit this work for the above badge (linked).