

Formative Assessment Game: “Who am I?” (Secondary 3-4)

Introduction

Assessment need not always be formal and can be fun. The following example takes the form of a guessing game, which aims to assess students' ability to ask questions effectively. It shows how formative assessment can be used as a tool to promote classroom and self-learning in an interesting way.

The task illustrates how:

- formative assessment can be used to promote pleasurable language learning and teaching;
- self, peer and teacher feedback can be used to enhance students' speaking skills; and
- self-learning skills can be promoted through formative assessment.

The task helps students:

- find out, through self, peer and teacher feedback, more about their oral proficiency (including the use of questioning techniques) and develop strategies for improvement;
- develop their creativity, and skills of collaboration, communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, self-learning and self-management; and
- develop a commitment to independent / lifelong language learning as well as social skills through assuming different roles in group activities.

Background Knowledge

- Students have learnt how to set and answer different types of questions such as yes / no questions and open-ended questions. They are familiar with wh-questions, e.g. questions beginning with “What”, “Where”, “When”, “Why”.
- They have practised using stress and intonation in speech appropriately.
- They have also been taught the features of effective speech and are familiar with the criteria presented in the self and peer evaluation checklist.

The Assessment Task

- In this formative assessment task, students assume the role of guests at a birthday party where they are playing the “Celebrities” game. Students work in groups of 4. One member plays the role of a celebrity based on given information. The other members ask questions in order to guess the identity of the celebrity.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Process	Impact on Learning
<p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who play the role of the celebrity select a card from the “Celebrities Box”* and read the given information to get prepared. • The other students prepare questions to help them make the correct guess, while observing the rule that they should refrain from asking questions which directly reveal the identity of the celebrity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students’ motivation is raised when they choose a celebrity and play a game in class. • Students practise skimming and scanning for overall understanding and specific information. • Students apply their knowledge of different question types and formulate questions to obtain useful information.
<p>Questioning Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are actively involved in asking and answering questions. • They audio-tape / video-tape their role play for purposes of self, peer and teacher assessment. • Students change roles and play the game again. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use questioning techniques to gather information and apply their skills to convey information. • Students develop creativity and communication and problem-solving skills integratively in completing the task. • Students develop a range of social skills through varying the roles in the game.

* A collection of materials / data files on celebrities has been compiled for the purpose of this task. In fact, students can be asked to work in groups to contribute materials to the collection, making the game more engaging.

<p>Self / Peer / Teacher Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students listen to the audio recordings or watch the video recordings of their role play and make use of a “Checklist” to do self and peer assessment of their speaking performances. • Students reflect on the questions they have used in the role play and consider how improvements can be made. • As a class, students listen to the audio recordings or watch the video recordings of individual groups and share their self and peer feedback. • The teacher provides encouragement and makes suggestions for further improvement. • The teacher collects the audio / video recordings, identifies students’ strengths and weaknesses, and plans follow-up work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students develop strategies of planning, managing and evaluating their own learning. • Students develop critical thinking and collaboration skills when they assess and make suggestions for improvement on aspects such as fluency, pronunciation, intonation, audibility, eye contact, facial expression, gesture and questioning techniques. • Students evaluate their questioning techniques and skills in conveying information through self, peer and teacher assessment and develop strategies for improvement. • Future learning activities are planned according to students’ needs and abilities.
<p>Extension</p> <p>As homework, individual students gather information about their favourite celebrity through various sources and create a card for the “Celebrities Box”. They can also set questions to test their peers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-learning takes place when students search, select and organise information. • Students may invite parents to provide ideas, guidance and feedback in the process.

	Assessment Criteria for Speaking
Fluency	This refers to the way one speaks. If a person speaks fluently, he / she is able to do so with ease and confidence and without many pauses.
Pronunciation	This refers to the way in which a word is said. When a person pronounces a word correctly, he / she says it with the right sound(s) and the proper stress.
Intonation	Intonation is the rise and fall of a person's voice as he / she speaks. For example, people tend to raise their voice in order to add meaning to what they say.
Audibility (voice level)	It is important that one speaks loudly enough so that one's ideas can get across clearly to the person(s) to whom one is speaking. If one speaks too softly, one's ideas may not be heard, no matter how good they are. In such cases, the purpose of speaking is defeated.
Eye contact	Establishing eye contact with the person(s) to whom one is speaking is important. Looking directly at the person(s) to whom one speaks gives the impression that one is sincere and confident. On the other hand, dropping one's head or avoiding direct eye contact signifies a lack of self-confidence and can sometimes be taken for indifference.
Facial expression	This refers to the feelings that are revealed on the speaker's face. When a person is excited about what he / she is saying, his / her face will show excitement. If he / she is saying something sad, he / she will look serious.
Gesture	This refers to the movement that the speaker makes with his / her body, especially his / her hands or head, to convey emotion or information. For example, one can nod one's head to show agreement. Appropriate gestures add to the effect of the speaker's presentation.

CHECKLIST

Tick (✓) the appropriate boxes:

	Poor		Very Good	
Fluency	1	2	3	4
Pronunciation	1	2	3	4
Intonation	1	2	3	4
Audibility (voice level)	1	2	3	4
Eye Contact	1	2	3	4
Facial Expression	1	2	3	4
Gesture	1	2	3	4