

Assessment for, as and of Learning

Category: Assessment, Feedback and Learning

Assessment for, as and of learning distinguishes three primary purposes for gathering and using evidence. Assessment of learning judges achievement, usually for reporting or certification. Assessment for learning informs immediate teaching and learning decisions, while assessment as learning places particular emphasis on learners' monitoring and regulation of their own learning.

These are functions rather than fixed task types: the same quiz may serve different purposes according to when it occurs, who interprets the evidence and what follows. Sound design makes the dominant purpose and consequences explicit ([Earl, 2013](#)).

Three Purposes

1. **Of learning:** Summarise attained standards for grades, progression, selection or certification.
2. **For learning:** Use evidence during learning to adapt teaching, support and next steps.
3. **As learning:** Develop learners' capacity to judge quality, set goals and regulate their work.
4. **Purpose alignment:** Match timing, evidence, interpretation and stakes to the intended function.
5. **Purpose balance:** Combine functions deliberately without allowing high-stakes judgement to dominate learning.

Examples in Practice

On a postgraduate presentation, the final assessed performance provides evidence of learning. A rehearsal with tutor and peer comments supports learning, while the presenter's comparison of recordings against criteria develops assessment as learning.

Why It Matters

Clear purposes prevent every assessment from becoming merely a grade. A balanced system documents achievement while also generating usable evidence and strengthening learners' independence, although the boundaries between the three functions may remain productively blurred. Reporting should also distinguish individual achievement from cohort comparison and explain when evidence collected for learning will later contribute to a consequential judgement or decision ([Dann, 2014](#)).

Further Reading

6. Earl, L. M. (2013). [Assessment as learning: Using classroom assessment to maximize student learning](#) (2nd ed.). Corwin.
7. Dann, R. (2014). [Assessment as learning: Blurring the boundaries of assessment and learning for theory, policy and practice](#). *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 21(2), 149–166.
8. National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). [Assessment OF/FOR/AS learning](#).

Related Terms: Formative Assessment | Summative Assessment | Self-Assessment | Feedback Literacy