



STEP 6: Assess Learning



Introduction

You are now aware of the responsibilities of workplace mentoring, the six step approach to teaching skills, the importance of identifying the point of the lesson, how to demonstrate a skill, providing practice opportunities, and giving feedback. This part of the course is all about assessing learning to determine skill levels and progress, and to plan next steps.



Objectives: Your Learning Plan

In order to...	Complete the following learning activities...
<i>Recognize the importance of assessment as a part of teaching and learning skills</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on your experiences relating to assessment (3 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Consider the key word definitions (2 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Read information about "The Value of Assessing" (5 minutes)
<i>Describe a skill assessment with examples</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read information about "Skill Assessments" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Watch and think about "Storekeeper Case Example" (2 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Explain a progress assessment with examples</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read information about "Progress Assessments" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Watch and think about "Cooper Case Example" (2 minutes)
<i>Identify methods of assessing progress with examples</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read about "Methods for Assessing Progress" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Watch and think about "Mentors' Perspectives" (2 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Read information about "Planning Next Steps" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Complete "Workplace Standards Activity" (10 minutes)
<i>Distinguish assessment strategies in the workplace</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Review key word definitions (3 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Complete "Reflect on different perspectives" activity (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Review "Helpful Tips for the Workplace" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Consider and select tips for the workplace (5 minutes)



Progress Check: After Finishing Learning Activities

- ☐ Complete assessment self check and review your responses (10 minutes)
- ☐ Complete application assignment in Course Handbook (15 minutes)



Your Experiences Relating to this Step



Try to think about when you were assessed by someone else. Try to think about when you were asked to assess someone's progress. What worked well about each assessment experience? What did not work well about each?



Key Words Introduction

Think about what the key words mean. Watch for how they are used.

- Assessing:
- Skill Assessment:
- Standard:
- Progress Assessment:



The Value of Assessing

Apprentices need to know how they are doing, both with the skills they are learning, and with their overall progress. Assessments meet that need. Skill assessments focus on a focus is on a single, specific skill. Progress assessments focus on the apprentice's overall progress toward their learning goals. Both skill assessments and progress assessments are based on information gathered by the journeypersons and/or provided by the apprentices.

Whether assessing skill or progress, remember not to relate the person's performance to his or her gender or cultural background. Focus on the actions you have observed. Everyone shares the responsibility for creating a positive and respectful working and learning environment.



Methods for Assessing Progress

There are several different methods that can be used to gather information to make an assessment. These can include (but are not limited to)

- *Observation* - Watching the person's performance
- *Discussion* - Asking the person questions

- *Challenge* - Setting up a challenge or demonstration for the person
- *Product* - Checking the person's finished work
- *External Assessor* - Having another expert assess the person
- *Self Assessment* - Assessing own work, then discuss



It is important to be sure that the apprentice knows that assessment is taking place. You may be observing the people all the time, but they still need warning about specific assessment activities. This allows them to prepare for assessment. It also means the person can be more relaxed when he or she is not being assessed.

You can also ask the person about his or her reaction to being assessed. Work out an approach to assessment that doesn't intimidate.



Skill Assessments

When the assessment focus is on a single skill, it's called a *skill assessment*. The apprenticeship process involves regular assessment and documentation of skills and learning. This is formally tracked in the apprenticeship Record of Occupational Progress (logbook). As journeypersons are teaching new skills, they are continually assessing how the apprentices are doing. The journeyperson regularly observes and assesses the abilities of the apprentice to perform a particular skill. This is the basis of giving apprentices feedback, communicating what you see them doing, and planning next steps.

During the steps of a workplace lesson, the journeyperson does several skill assessments, comparing the person's skill to a *standard*. The purpose of the skill assessment is to give feedback to the person and, possibly, to adjust the training plan for that lesson or skill.

A guide for assessing skills on a day-to-day basis...

Skill Assessment	What is the specific skill that I am assessing?
<i>Observe</i>	What did I see as I watched the apprentice perform the skill?
<i>Discuss</i>	Did I ask the apprentice questions about completing the skill?
<i>Challenge</i>	How could I set up a challenge/demonstration for the skill?
<i>Product</i>	What is the quality/quantity of the finished work for the skill?
<i>Assessor</i>	Could I have another expert assess performance for the skill?



<i>Self Assessment</i>	Have I encouraged the apprentice to assess his/her own performance on the skill?
<i>Follow Up</i>	Did I discuss the skill assessment with the apprentice? Did I identify areas of strength and strategies for improvement?
<i>Involvement</i>	Did I involve the apprentice in the skill assessment?

Assessments are being done each time the mentor compares the apprentice's performance level to a standard. The regular, day-to-day skill assessments being done are often a good launching pad to discuss the formal performance on skills in the Record of Occupational Progress (logbook).



Storekeeper Case Example



Take the time now to watch the video clips pertaining to the Storekeeper and how she assesses her apprentices (duration: 40 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nscrcal.nscrc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_S01.rm)
http://nscrcal.nscrc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_S01.rm

OR view the video from your course CD-ROM (Be sure to insert CD-ROM first)
 OPEN this file: Mentor_Step6_S01.rm

What Happened? The coach is continually making skill assessments. This is the case with the Storekeeper here, but it is also true with every skilled trade.



Progress Assessments

It is important for the journey person working with an apprentice to assess overall progress (more than skill by skill) being made by the person. This is called a *progress assessment*. The purpose of the progress assessment is to help in adjusting the overall learning plan. The learning plan includes the way that lessons are linked, ordered, and paced for the individual. The learning



plan may have to change, at any point, as new information is gained about the person based on his or her progress and performance. The learning plan needs to fit the person's skill level, learning preferences, and natural abilities. Progress assessments focus on overall progress being made. It is a great time to review the apprentice's Record of Occupational Progress (logbook).

A guide for assessing overall progress...

Progress Assessment	How long has it been since I last sat down with the apprentice and reviewed overall progress?
<i>Observe</i>	What have I been seeing with the apprentice's overall progress?
<i>Discuss</i>	Have I been asking the apprentice questions about their progress?
<i>Challenge</i>	How could I set up a challenge/demonstration relating to the apprentice's overall progress?
<i>Product</i>	What is the overall quality/quantity of the apprentice's finished work?
<i>Assessor</i>	Could I have another expert assess the apprentice's overall performance?
<i>Self Assessment</i>	Have I encouraged the apprentice to assess his/her own overall progress?
<i>Follow Up</i>	Did I discuss the progress assessment with the apprentice? Did I identify areas of strength and strategies for improvement? Did I look at the apprentice's logbook?
<i>Involvement</i>	Did I involve the apprentice in the progress assessment?

It is always important to keep the overall progress within the apprenticeship program in mind. It is helpful to provide regular, progress assessments with apprentices to go over overall progress being made to help in adjusting the overall learning. Providing feedback concerning overall development helps the apprentice, and the journeyperson in deciding whether to move ahead or to recycle certain steps. Once again, the Record of Occupational Progress (logbook) is an important tool in the assessment process. The logbook is an important reference point when discussing overall progress with an apprentice.



Cooper Case Example



Part 1: How is the Apprentice Doing

The first clip shows the cooper in discussions with another journeyperson about his apprentice's progress (duration: 60 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_C01.rm)

http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_C01.rm

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What Happened? The progress assessment involves looking at more than just individual skills. Instead, you are looking at the overall assessment of the progress. Doing a progress assessment helps in adjusting the overall learning plan. Depending on the results you may need to alter the pace, ordering, or linking of the lessons. Your approach should depend on a whole lot of things.

Part 2: Skill Assessment

Now take a look at a video of how the Cooper Mentor implements a skill assessment for his apprentice (duration: 40 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_C02.rm)

http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_C02.rm

OR view the video from your course CD-ROM (Be sure to insert CD-ROM first)
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Part 3: Skill Assessment Feedback

Now take a look at the feedback that Matthew receives from Mr. Sealy about his performance on the assessment (duration: 30 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_C03.rm)

http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_C03.rm

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What Happened? Now that you have seen some different cases illustrating the different ways of assessing a skill, how do you decide which one to use? What would you consider?



Case Example: Mentors' Perspectives



Part 1: Perspectives on Assessment

Watch this collage of clips to see what the journey person mentors have to say about their perspectives on assessment (duration: 30 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_M01.rm)

http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_M01.rm

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What Does This Mean? Did anything any of the mentors had to say change your mind about what assessment approach you favor?

Part 2: Perspectives on Standards

Take the time now to watch and listen to what the case journey person mentors have to say about what standards they use in assessment (duration: 30 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_M02.rm)

http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step6_M02.rm

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What Does This Mean? There are industry standard and personal standards. It is important that the person knows if their work meets the standards. The journey person helps the apprentice achieve the standard.



Workplace Standards Activity



In your job or workplace, what are the standards for skill performance that a journeyperson must know and understand?

What are the sources of these standards?

- ☐ National Occupational Analyses document(s)
- ☐ Record of Occupational Progress (Logbook)
- ☐ Workplace policies?
- ☐ Operations manuals?
- ☐ Safety requirements?
- ☐ Building codes?
- ☐ Job descriptions?
- ☐ Other? (please specify)

How can a person get access to these standards sources?

How can you find out more about the standards in your trade?



Planning Next Steps

An assessment is not completed until you give feedback on performance. The person needs to know where he or she stands as soon as possible. Remember the feedback techniques from the previous step.

Skill Assessment

The first result of a skill assessment is feedback to the person about his or her skill performance. People also need to know what they need to do in order to improve their performance.

Progress Assessment

As a result of an assessment of the overall progress, you may decide to change or adjust the learning plan by:

- Changing the pace of the lessons
- Changing the order of the lessons
- Re-focusing the plan to fit the person's needs

You may want to involve the person in discussing the options for planning next steps or changes. Feedback from the apprentice is very important input to the journeyperson. It assists greatly in making plans for continued learning.



Key Words Review



Assessing	Observing a person's ability to perform a particular skill and comparing their observed ability to a standard
Skill Assessment	An assessment focused on a particular skill, task or lesson
Standard	A measure of the required or expected level of skill or ability – may be written down and defined or may be set and described by the supervisor in the workplace
Progress Assessment	An assessment focused on overall development or abilities



Think About Different Perspectives

Think about these different points of view. How might you respond?

One Apprentice's Point of View:

"I get so nervous when it comes time to show someone else what I can do. I can do something perfectly, if no one is watching, but as soon as someone is watching, everything seems to change..."

One Mentor's Point of View:

"Every time the apprentice asks me for help, it seems like I end up taking over and doing all of the work..."

One Employer's Point of View:

"There are so many stupid forms that need to be filled out - it seems to waste a whole lot of time that could be used more productively..."

What are some similar situations OR differing points of view that you have encountered in your experiences in the workplace? Discuss your experiences - we all learn from each other!



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Assessment Self Check



The self check presents questions as a reminder of some key points. Complete the questions, and then check your responses at the end.

1. A skill assessment focuses on a person's overall development or abilities.
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. A progress assessment is when you check to see a person's ability to perform a certain task to a certain standard.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. Explain the value of assessing progress

4. List four different methods of assessing progress.



Application Assignment

Complete the Step 6 Application in your Course Handbook.

Application Assignments can be completed in written format and/or contributed in a group discussion and/or compiled in another way that makes sense.



Helpful Tips for the Workplace



What are some tips for getting the most out of a mentor and/or apprentice?

Knowledge:

- ☐ **Be aware of the importance of assessment:** People need to know where they stand as soon as possible. Assessments are exactly how you make that happen. Always be sure to provide assessment!

Attitude:

- ☐ **Take learning seriously:** The apprenticeship process does have the goal of developing skilled journeypersons. It is important to keep progress within the overall program always on the radar.
- ☐ **Be flexible about finding ways to connect:** Look for opportunities to connect and learn from people around you. Learning can happen any time - lunch time, break time, stopping for a moment by the water cooler, try not to miss a chance to learn from someone around you. You need to find and use those small pockets of time. Take advantage of the moments that you get. Learning does not only happen at certain times in certain places.
- ☐ **Share the responsibility:** Apprenticeship training by its very nature is a partnership. The apprentice, the journeyperson and the employer all need to share the responsibility for the learning, the communication, the work that needs to be done, the skill demonstrations and the assessments. Workplace learning is a shared responsibility.

Behaviour:

- ☐ **Assess regularly:** Assessment should be an ongoing part of workplace learning. Use different types of assessments to serve different purposes.
- ☐ **Relax:** Everyone gets nervous sometimes. During an assessment just do things as you have always done them, be yourself and trust in what you know.
- ☐ **Meet and Talk:** It is important that the apprentice and journeyperson make an effort to meet and discuss the overall progress in the apprenticeship program.

Learning never ends - keep track of what works best for you...



Self Check Answers



1 - This is FALSE - A PROGRESS assessment focuses on a person's overall development or abilities.

2 - This is FALSE - A SKILL assessment is when you check to see a person's ability to perform a certain task to a certain standard.

3 - Assessing progress is very important - people need to know how they are doing and where they need improvement to get better!

4 - There are about as many different ways to assess progress as there are things to assess progress on! Think about what methods of assessment are meaningful and appropriate for the particular skill and situation.

- *Observe* - Watch the apprentice's performance
- *Discuss* - Ask the apprentice questions
- *Challenge* - Set up a challenge or demonstration
- *Product* - Check the apprentice's finished work
- *External Assessor* - Another expert assesses apprentice
- *Self Assessment* - Apprentice assesses own work



Learning Notes