Erasmus+

TIME
Train Intercultural Mediators for a Multicultural Europe

Training Course for Intercultural Mediators for Immigrants

Part V

Assessment

Methodology

Contents

1. Introduction

Through the assessment process training providers and supervisors will know if the objectives of theoretical and practical training have been fulfilled, i.e. whether the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. At the same time, through the assessment process trainees are informed about their progress and gaps they have to fill in, and adjustments can be made where necessary. It goes without saying that assessment and learning should be aligned with the intended course learning outcomes:

- Learning outcomes tell us *what* students are expected to have learned
- The assessment plan shows *how* they will demonstrate their learning[1]

In order to align 21st century curricula and learning environments, the traditional assessment models must be revised. Many argue that «the emphasis should shift from summative assessment to continual, diagnostic, and formative assessment throughout the learning process"[2] which is in line with the constructivist approach we employ in TIME. "Constructivism favours evaluation for and as learning (formative and self-assessment), as opposed to evaluation of learning (summative assessment)".[3] Such a shift is considered crucial, as it allows the individual differences to surface and takes into account the application of learning instead of standardizing students.

For the TIME training curriculum, we agree with Andrew Scholtz's (2007)[4] contention that if 'assessment is to be meaningful it should in some way reflect the practice of the profession, vocation or practice being assessed, while at the same time giving learners the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills' and connect them to their own previous personal experience. The latter, as it has already been discussed, is considered as an essential aspect of adult learning.

At the same time, we are aware that constructivist assessment techniques have been surrounded by controversy. Most educators will not deny the significance of using formative and self-reflective assessment; however, they are also advocating the validity and reliability thought to be associated with standardized testing (i.e. summative assessment). What they highlight is that through assessment the performance of students, i.e. their knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences, needs to be judged and measured against a predefined set of criteria, the desired learning outcomes.[5]

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[1] https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/aligning-assessment-learning-outcomes

[2] http://www.curtin.edu.au/edusummit/local/docs/Pre-summit_brief_paper_TWG5_-_Assessment.pdf

[3] http://etec.ctlt.ubc.ca/510wiki/EvaluationConstructivistLearning

[4] Scholtz, A. (2007). An analysis of the impact of an authentic assessment strategy on student performance in a technology-mediated constructivist classroom: A study revisited. *International Journal of Education and Development Using Information and Communication Technology*, 3(4), 42-53. Retrieved from http://ijedict.dec.uwi.edu/viewarticle.php?id=422

[5] http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/development/academic/assessmentandfeedback/principlesofassessment/typesofassessment-definitions/

The assessment methodology and tools suggested for the TIME IMfI training course draw upon a combination of constructivist assessment principles as well as more traditional ones.

2. Timing and structure of assessment

Assessment in training has usually three distinct phases: ex ante, ongoing and ex post. Each phase serves different purposes:

Ex-ante assessment is used to evaluate the learners' status of knowledge, skills, attitudes and competences when training starts. This helps trainers to identify the specific learning needs of each learner group and adapt training accordingly.

Ongoing assessment on one hand has a monitoring function, enabling trainers and learners to track progress, estimate the effectiveness of training methods, and make adaptations where necessary. Strengths and weaknesses become evident and the achievement of topic-specific learning outcomes can be established. On the other hand, ongoing assessment provides gradually the trainer and the training provider with important information necessary for the final assessment of learners.

Ex-post assessment allows learners, trainers and training providers alike to establish whether the desired learning outcomes as a whole have been achieved through the training course and to what extent. It provides the final profile, as to say, of the learner.

For IMfI training all three assessment phases need to be implemented. For the needs of the TIME course, the following structure and timing is proposed:

Ex-ante: The training provider is responsible for evaluating **linguistic skills** of candidates either through certificates or through language tests. Candidates not possessing the required linguistic skills should not be allowed to participate in the course. Trainers are responsible to identify the **actual learning needs** of the learner group through targeted activities at the beginning of each topic or sub-topic. Such activities are included in the exploration phase and usually include questions, simple tests and representation exercises. We are not going to elaborate on them in this document, as they are of a purely formative nature for the training process.

Ongoing: This assessment phase is applicable throughout the learning procedure and has cumulative use. It is guided by the principles of the constructivist approach employed in the TIME IMfI course. The methods and tools to be used for ongoing assessment during theoretical and practical training are described in the respective sections.

Ex-post: We propose to carry out ex post assessment in two ways: first, the results of ongoing evaluation are collected in the personal file of each learner, so that the **individual learner profile** is constructed. Second, through specific tasks after the completion of the training, the learner is asked to demonstrate how he is able **to combine and integrate multiple aspects of theoretical and practical training** in complex situations. The tasks proposed for this activity

are described in the section *Final Assessment*. The combination of cumulative assessment and the final tasks compiles the final assessment of each learner.

3. Assessment methodology for theoretical training

3.1. Description

Given the general objectives and the timing of assessment presented above an essential distinction can be drawn between **formative (ongoing) assessment and summative (ex-post) one.** While the goal in the process of formative assessment is *to monitor* students' learning, in order to provide them with feedback, the summative assessment aims at *evaluating* students' learning. Within the broader category of formative assessment methods we will also include **self-assessment** methods, as their focal point is also on students' need to be active participants in their learning, which requires them to evaluate their own learning process. Formative assessment is considered part of the instructional process, as long as the assessment results are used to inform the instructional and learning process (Black & William, 1998).[6]

Summative assessments are given usually ex-post (after the end of each module) but also periodically (i.e. mid term exam/test), in order to determine at a particular point of time what learners know and what they do not know.

Before we proceed to present briefly the diversity of assessment types to be used in the TIME IMfI course, we will present the assessment types that can be used formatively and summatively in the context of the suggested IMfI training. These are in line with the teaching methodology and tools developed in Part II, Training Methodology.

Types of formative assessment:

– Active participation / observations
– Case study (self-assessment tool as well)
– Essay
– Group/team work
– Home works (regular)
– Journal contribution (self-assessment tool as well)
– Portfolio (self-assessment tool as well)
– Presentation
– Peer evaluation
– Simulation / role playing

Types of summative assessment

- – Attendance
- – Case study
- – Essay
- – Midterm test(s)
- – Portfolio
- – Presentation
- – Simulation / role playing
- – Final exam

Apart from the ex-ante assessment phase on which we will not elaborate further in this document, the assessment types we recommend for each of the other two phases (ongoing and ex-post) fall within the two above described categories, formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment takes place throughout the course of each module, while summative assessment at the end of each module.

After successful completion of theoretical and practical training, the assessment process culminates with a final case study. For a more detailed presentation of the final case study see the section *Final Assessment*.

3.2. Assessment types for theoretical training

In what follows we will present briefly the diversity of assessment types to be used in alphabetical order. While the suggested assessment techniques are not specific to intercultural training, they have been selected on the basis of their compatibility with the principles of constructivism and adult learning presented in section Part II – Training Methodology, in so far as they reflect the practice of the IMfI profile.

Active participation / observation
One form of formative assessment is observing if students are working actively on their tasks or need clarifications. In roaming around the classroom, the teacher occasionally offers guidance and encouragement to the students. This evidence can be recorded and used as feedback for students' learning or as anecdotal material shared with them.[7]

Attendance
Class attendance is considered as an important element of the students' learning process. Yet, some instructors opt not to assign grades to attendance at all, as they express concerns about

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[7] Known also and as anecdotal records. For more see for example
http://www.ehow.com/about_5419008_types-formative-assessment.html

unfair treatment of shy or introvert students; they also foreground the difference between participation/attendance and engagement, as meaningful engagement can happen.[8]

Mini case study

Case studies are extremely popular as modes of formative as well as summative assessment. They depict real life situations in which problems need to be solved. Students are introduced to a real or fictional case study, either as individuals or in groups, and they are asked to identify a set of problems, and subsequently apply their knowledge of the subject to the case. Case studies are a powerful learning tool for developing cognitive skills of students; when conducted in groups they can enhance oral communication and team building.[9] At the same time they are very useful assessment tools, especially in a constructivist context.

Essay

Essay writing can be considered a traditional means of assessment. Yet, it can easily be employed within a constructivist approach to assessment. It is usually a piece of writing composed by students to address a question or a topic set by the instructor usually within a predefined word-limit. Through essays a variety of learning outcomes can be assessed.

Final exam (oral or written)

Being oral or written, depending on the knowledge, skills and competences that need to be assessed, final exams are types of summative assessment. In the case of oral exams the presentations skills become an essential aspect of what is evaluated. In the context examined oral exams can take the form of an one-to-one **interview** as a means to explore what students have learned by using a more personalized oral interaction. An important element here is that the teacher can influence how the interview proceeds in order to test certain skills.

Group / team work

Group work allows for the employment of different skills, knowledge and experiences that individuals have. It can be approached both as a skill to be learned and as a means of carrying forward curriculum concerns and of enriching classroom experience[10].

Home works (regular)

Home work helps students to retain information taught in the classroom; it develops study habits and independent learning. It bridges the gap between classroom and home and can be used as part of a continual or portfolio assessment. It may be used to consolidate classwork or to expand it.

Journal contribution

One means of formative (and self-) assessment is the journal. Students are required to periodically write their thoughts and feelings about their learning progress. They can also

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[8] http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-teaching-strategies/daydreaming-deep-thought-using-formative-assessment-evaluate-student-participation/

[9] For more see for example https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessment-case-studies-and-scenarios

[10] For more see http://infed.org/mobi/what-is-groupwork/

reflect upon what they like or didn't like about a particular task. This information gives the teacher a quick view of how effective a certain lesson plan was.[11]

Midterm test(s)
Depending on the knowldge, skills and competences that need to be assessed, mid term tests are types of summative assessment. They can be oral or written. In the case of oral exams the presentations skills become an essential aspect of what is evaluated.

Portfolio
Portfolios are a collection of student work that allows assessment by providing evidence of effort and accomplishments in relation to specific instructional goals (Jardine, 1996).[12] They can be used both as a record of students' development in a number of areas, as well as a means of summative assessment. [13]

Presentation
It is often used to assess students' learning in individual or group projects. It is the process of showing and explaining a topic to an audience. Presentation assessment usually consists of a topic for the student to research, discuss and present. Questions and answers are usually following the presentation.

Peer evaluation
It helps to create a learning community within a classroom. Students are exposed to the thinking of their peers and their alternative feedback as peers' observation may differ from each other. With peer evaluation, students see each other as resources for understanding and checking for quality work against previously established criteria.[14]

Simulation or role playing

They are considered forms of experiential learning. Students learn through their exploration as they are provided with opportunities for learning situated in a real-life context through simulating the activities of an IMfI in the field.[15] Role playing and simulations significantly contribute to learning and assessment as they provide opportunities to reflect on learning, to show how tacit knowledge works etc. At a culminating academic moment (such as the end of a module) a simulation / role playing can take the character of an **exhibition or demonstration** and can work as a summative assessment. It can be open to the public, and community

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[11] http://www.ehow.com/about_5419008_types-formative-assessment.html

[12] http://www.education.com/reference/article/portfolio-assessment/

[13] http://www.unm.edu/~devalenz/handouts/portfolio.html

[14]

https://www.amle.org/BrowsebyTopic/WhatsNew/WNDet/TabId/270/ArtMID/888/ArticleID/286/Formative-and-Summative-Assessments-in-the-Classroom.aspx

[15] This is similar to a performance task in so far as it calls for learners to apply their knowledge in context. Here the learners are asked to apply their knowledge and skills in realistic conditions and constrains. These „authentic" tasks provide learners the opportunity to understand their purpose and relevance.

members and local experts are often invited to attend.[16] In the context of the IMfI training **project** based learning shares a lot of similarities with simulation and role playing.[17]

Table 1 presents which assessment types are recommended per module.

[16] For more see http://archive.essentialschools.org/resources/123.html
[17] http://etec.ctlt.ubc.ca/510wiki/EvaluationConstructivistLearning

Table 1: Recommended assessment types per module.

Assessment type	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5	Module 6	Module 7
Active participation/ observation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Attendance	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mini case study	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Essay	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
Group/team work	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Home works (regular)	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y
Journal contribution	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Midterm test(s)	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y
Portfolio	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Presentation	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Peer evaluation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Simulation / role playing	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Final exam (oral or written)	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y

4. Assessment methodology for practical training

4.1. Description

The assessment process focusses on both the implementation process of practical training activities and the final achievement of desired learning outcomes. The main point of interest is the professional development and improvement of trainees in a balanced and integrative way so that high-quality IM services can be rendered at the completion of training. Assessment is ongoing and summative, based mainly on qualitative data that is collected from multiple sources such as the trainees themselves, staff of the hosting institutions as well as the supervision and coaching sessions.

The proposed assessment methodology refers to the following aspects:

a) The **consolidation and application of the knowledge** acquired by trainees during the theoretical part of the training.

b) The extent to which **desired learning outcomes in terms of skills and competences** have been achieved, as described in Part I. This translates into the ability to perform the main intercultural mediation tasks[30], according to specific qualitative standards and professional ethics:
   - Linguistic interpreting
   - Communication
   - Development of a relationship of trust and effective collaboration between professionals and migrants during administrative procedures and service provision
   - Provision of information to migrants regarding administrative procedures, access to services and supportive resources
   - Provision of assistance in navigating the services
   - Cultural brokerage or interpreting
   - Conflict prevention and mediation
   - Contribution to informational events and projects in order to raise awareness and enhance intercultural communication and integration
   - Advocacy (under specific circumstances)

c) Further aspects of job performance such as:
   - **Active participation** in the procedures involved in practical training
   - **Responsibility** and **reliability**
   - **Attitudes and behavior** towards the responsible staff and employees of the hosting institution
   - **Cooperation capacity** and **team working**

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[30] As defined in the *Desired IMfI Profile and Related Learning Outcomes,* Intellectual Output O3 by the TIME partnership (available at www.mediation-time.eu)

- **Problem solving skills**, **critical thinking** and **flexibility** according to the challenges of each intervention

The **supervisor** assigned by the training institution is the main responsible for collecting and processing necessary information. We propose that a combination of methods be used such as:

a) **Observation**. Through this procedure the evaluator notes in a systematic way occurrences and behaviors to be processed for the production of safe conclusions. Observation will be carried out by both the assessed (self-observation) and by others (hetero-observation). In the latter case observation will be conducted by the supervisor during the supervision sessions. Recording may take place in real time or retrospectively. In the case of self-observation trainees will record behaviors, actions, tasks, problem-solving steps etc.

b) **Discussion**. This method allows cooperation between the evaluated person and the evaluator. A communicative relationship is developed between them in line with the supervision methodology described in Part IV. Discussions will be guided by interview guides with open-end questions that will allow the identification of the trainee's opinions and attitudes concerning the implementation of practical training and execution of tasks in the hosting institution. In addition, task, incident and skills analysis regularly performed during supervision sessions will provide further data that is indicative of the trainee's development. During such analysis trainees will be asked to describe encountered intercultural mediation incidents and how the service was provided, what problems emerged, and the solutions found.

c) **Task performance assessment.** By this procedure changes in the trainee's performance are measured as a result of the implementation of on the job training. Learning outcomes in terms of skills and competences are assessed in a more direct way. Efficiency assessment can take place in a variety of ways, including performance checklists, evaluation rubrics, and action plans. In the action plans trainees are asked to describe how they applied or how they intend to apply what they have learned so far, allowing the supervisor to assess problem-solving skills, critical thinking, autonomy, flexibility etc. It should be noted that to a great extent task performance assessment takes place through observation; however the timing and tools used differ somehow.

d) **Assessment from third persons.** For assessment to be complete the opinion of other persons working directly with the trainee should be taken into account. Staff from the hosting institution as well as the coaches will be consulted to offer their perspective on the trainee's performance and progress. Through specific questionnaires they will be asked to provide information on specific aspects of attitude, performance and behavior they can directly observe and evaluate.

e) **Self-assessment.** Trainees will be asked to assess their own progress, as well as perceived strengths, weaknesses and challenges. Self-perceived competence and efficiency, as well as the detection of persisting difficulties will help the supervisor design more effectively the supervision sessions and better assess aspects of emotional balance and resilience important in intercultural mediation. The questionnaires to be used should be in line with the task complexity and the specific objectives of each training phase.

f) **Analysis of complementary data.** Complementary data may refer to attendance sheets, internal procedures of the hosting institutions, service-user questionnaires, comments etc. Such data is particularly useful for the assessment of further aspects of job performance that are not included in the desired learning outcomes.

Upon completion of practical training the supervisor drafts a final report for each trainee, drawing from all the aforementioned sources.

4.2. Assessment tools, frequency of collection and reporting

The following scheme is indicative of an assessment procedure in line with the above recommended methodology. All reporting is submitted by the supervisor. Needless to say, there may be other schemes consistent with this methodology that take into account several variables specific to the implementation context.

Method	Tools	Frequency of collection	Reporting
Observation	Observation form Trainee's diary	Supervision sessions Weekly	Monthly
Discussion	Questionnaires with open questions Incident analysis	Supervision sessions	At the middle and the end of practical training
Task performance	Task performance checklist Evaluation rubric Action plans (trainees) Portfolio (trainees)	At the middle and the end of practical training	At the middle and the end of practical training
Assessment from third persons	Questionnaires	At the middle and the end of practical training	At the middle and the end of practical training
Self-assessment	Questionnaires	Monthly	At the middle and the end of practical training
Complementary data	Attendance sheets and other data as described before	Weekly	At the middle and the end of practical training

4.3. Recommended assessment type for learning outcomes in main tasks

Learning outcomes achieved in main IM tasks	Observation	Discussion	Task performance	Assessment from third persons	Self-assessment	Other data
Linguistic interpreting	X		X	X	X	
Communication	X	X	X	X	X	
Development of a relationship of trust and effective collaboration between professionals and migrants during administrative procedures and service provision	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provision of information to migrants regarding administrative procedures, access to services and supportive resources	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provision of assistance in navigating the services	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cultural brokerage or interpreting	X	X	X	X	X	
Conflict prevention and mediation	X	X	X	X	X	
Contribution to informational events and projects	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advocacy under specific circumstances	X	X	X	X	X	
Further aspects of job performance	X	X	X	X	X	X

5. Final assessment

After the completion of theoretical and practical training, it is recommended that final assessment take place in the form of one or two complex case-studies. These case studies can be designed as scenarios the elements of which are drawn from a variety of "real" field situations encountered by the IMfI. The trainee will have to apply theoretical and practical knowledge acquired through all training modules and on-the-job training in an integrative, critically reflective manner.

Following the case study methodology presented in Part II – Training Methodology (section 3.3 and Appendix), the final case studies will require from the trainee to define the critical points of the case, design the intervention, and then enact the discussions before the encounter, the triadic encounter itself, and the discussion after the encounter. The trainee should be able to demonstrate that he/she is able to perform intercultural mediation tasks in an adequate, efficient and professional way, in accordance with the IM profile developed by the TIME project. This final test will provide both trainers of the theoretical part and the supervisor of practical training with a representative picture of what the trainee is finally able to do.

The training provider is responsible for the design and implementation of the final case studies. We recommend a pass-fail approach.

Qualitative assessment as realized during theoretical training and practical training, along with the results of the final case study will be documented in the personal file of each trainee, which he/she can use as a first portfolio.

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