

**The Effect of the Learning Targets on Assessment Tasks**  
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**Abstract:**

Before starting teaching, teachers must establish the needs of the learners and this could be done best by determining or recognizing the learning targets which should be clearly stated and there should be matching between the learning targets and the assessment tasks. Learning targets are the interim academic goals that teachers establish for students who are working toward meeting more comprehensive learning standards.

Despite the importance of the learning targets in leaning and teaching in general and for assessemnet tasks in particular , most teachers donot realize this or ignore it or may be donot know how to write learning targets and matching them with the assessment tasks. This study is an attempt to present a framework for understanding the importance of learning targets where they play an integral role in teaching and learning and in assessment tasks .The study also tries to draw the intention to an important view which is involving students by sharing them the learning targets and self assessment.

Consequently ,the major aims of this study are to :

1. explore the effect of learning targets on assessment tasks and to
2. present a model of writibg learning targets according to Bloom’s cognitive domain and machibg them with the assessment tasks.

In order to achieve the aims of the study , the following procedures are going to be followed :

1. carry out theoretical review related to learning targets and assessment ,providing satisfactory definitions and identifying types and the importance of them ,
2. survey the most prominent taxonomies for educational targets ,
3. investigate the effect of learning targets on assessment tasks,
4. apply Bloom’s taxonomy to write a model of matching learning targets with the assessment tasks.

It is hoped that this study will be beneficial to EFL teachers of English language since it deals with two important points that affect the process of learning and teaching :the leaning targets and assessment which fall under applied linguistics.

**Keywords:** the process of learning and teaching, assessment .

## تأثير أهداف الدرس على مهام التقويم كوثر حميد فاضل وزارة التربية / اختصاص تربوي اقدم

### المخلص:

قبل بدء التعليم يجب على المعلمين أن يحددوا احتياجات المتعلمين وتكون أفضل طريقه لإنجاز ذلك بتحديد الأهداف التعليمية والتي تُعرف على انها جمل مختصره تصف ما يتوقع من الطالب أن يتعلمه في نهاية السنه الدراسية أو الوحدة الدراسية أو الدرس أو المشروع أو الحصه الدراسية حيث تمثل ما يحدده المعلم من أهداف أكاديمية للطلاب لتحقيق أهدافا علميه اكثر شمولاً. نأمل من الدراسة ان تكون مفيدة لمعلمي EFL اذ إنها تتناول أمرين مهمين يؤثران في عملية التعلم والتعليم وهما الاهداف التعليمية والتقويم والذان يقعان ضمن علم اللغة التطبيقي. تتألف الدراسة من جزأين وفي كل جزء، هناك جانب نظري والآخر عملي. نظرياً، يناقش الجزء الاول من الدراسة والذي يسلط الضوء على تعريف الأهداف التدريسية وأهميتها لكل من الطالب والمعلم والاداريين والبرنامج وتأثيره في تقنيات التقويم. كما يتناول الجزء الأول من الدراسة أنواع ومجالات الأهداف التعليمية، فضلاً عن المصفوفات التربوية لكتابة الأهداف التعليمية، اذ تسلط الدراسة الضوء على تصنيف بلوم بمجالاته الستة: المعرفة، الادراك، التطبيق، التحليل، التركيب، التقويم الجانب العملي، فيستعرض الدراسة معايير لكتابة اهداف تعليميه واضحه ومحدده .

يتناول الجانب النظري من الجزء الثاني من الدراسة ماهية التقويم وأساليبه واستخداماته، وأهميته في اتخاذ قرارات لها صلة بالطالب والمدرس والمسؤولين والاداريين والبرنامج التعليمي ، كما تتناول الدراسة مصطلحات لها صلة ومقاربه لمصطلح التقويم (الاختبار والتقييم) وانواعا مختلفة من اساليب التقويم البديل. ويقدم الجانب العملي من الجزء الثاني نموذجاً عن التوافق بين الأهداف التدريسية ومهام التقويم باعتماد المجال العقلي لتصنيف بلوم. وقد تمخض عن الدراسة نتائج مهمة أبرزها أهمية التوافق الوثيق بين أهداف الدرس وأساليب التقويم بحيث تكون على سبيل المثال الاختبارات مستمدة من أهداف الدرس. كما أن هناك حاجة ماسه لتعبير الهدف من التقويم بحيث لا يقتصر على منح شهادة للطالب تنقله الى مرحله أعلى اذ يجب ان يكون هدف التقويم المساعدة في تطوير صياغة أهداف التدريس ورفع مستوى التعليم لرفع المستوى التحصيلي للطالب .ولتحقيق الأهداف التعليمية الرئيسية، لابد من اطلاع الطلاب على اهداف الدرس ليتسنى لهم مراقبة تقدمهم طوال فترة التعليم.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** عملية التعلم والتعليم، التقويم.

## Introduction

Determining targets is the first step in the direction of successful learning and fruitful teaching. Learning targets are brief statements that describe what students will be expected to learn by the end of the school year, unit, lesson, project or class .

The study consists of two sections; in each section; there are a theoretical and a practical side. Theoretically, the first section discusses the definition and importance of the learning targets for the teacher, students, administrators and for the assessment tasks. It also sheds the light on the types and domains of the learning objectives or targets. It also sheds the light on the educational taxonomies for writing objectives especially the cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy with its six headings: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Practically, this section presents criteria for writing learning targets.

The second section sheds light on the definition of assessment, use, techniques, and its importance in certain decisions related to the student, teacher, administrators and program.

It also sheds the light on the types, principles of assessment and types of alternative assessment. Related terms: test, evaluation are also discussed in this section.

Practically, this section offers a sample of matching the learning targets with the assessment tasks based on the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy.

### Section One : Learning Targets:

#### 1.1. Definition of Learning Targets:

Learning targets, as their name implies, guide learning. They describe, in language that students understand, the lesson-sized chunk of information, skills, and reasoning processes that students will come to know deeply. Learning targets provide a common focus for the decisions that schools make about what works, what doesn't work, and what could work better. They help educators set challenging goals for what expert teachers and principals should know and be able to. (Moss and Brookhart, 2012:9) . Learning targets describe the intended lesson-sized learning outcome and the nature of evidence that will determine mastery of that outcome from a student's point of view . They contain the immediate learning aims for today's lesson.

The term targets specify what teachers would like students to achieve at the completion of an instructional segment (Nitko, 2004:10). They refer to the steps that students need to take to achieve or accomplish the goal . They are statements of instructional objectives which indicate observable terminal performances of the learners. They indicate what the students do or perform at the end of a lesson or unit (Thangasamy 2008:26).

## 1.2. The Usefulness of the Learning Targets:

Before starting teaching, one must attempt to establish the language needs of a particular student or group of students as accurately as possible and also determine their entry level. And it seems that the sound approach in language teaching English is to recognize what the targets of teaching are (Wilkins, 1974:58). In teaching English, targets should be clearly stated and the skills needed are to be well specified (Johnson et al, 1982:6-8).

Learning targets have benefits for teachers, administratives and students, for the teachers, learning targets provide guidance for their planning their instructions. They enable the teachers to plan the steps the students must take to achieve them and to search for the appropriate teaching procedures and techniques (Thangasamy, 2008 : 26 ). It is very important to state explicitly what teachers want students to gain from the lesson. They also help the teachers direct their teaching towards the important students' achievements that the teacher, the school and parents have in mind (Nitko, 2004:30). Guided by learning targets, teachers partner with their students during a formative learning cycle together and apply strong evidence of student learning to raise achievement (Moss & Brookhart, 2009). And they make informed decisions about how and when to differentiate instruction to challenge and engage all students in important and meaningful work to do (Nitko, 2004:16).

Guided by learning targets, principals can promote coherence between actions at the classroom level and actions at the school level and central-office administrators can implement effective strategies to increase student achievement across buildings with different needs and unique characteristics shaped by the students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members who work together in each building. They can develop and manage human capital to carry out their strategy for improvement, gain district (Moss & Brookhart, 2009).

Learning targets motivate students' learning as the students know beforehand what they must learn in any given unit of instruction, they can better direct their own attention and efforts (Thangasamy, 2008:28). They can also better allocate resources to promote student learning and lead professional development efforts in their building (Moss & Brookhart 2009). Learning targets are student-friendly descriptions—via words, pictures, actions, or some combination of the three—of what you intend students to learn or accomplish in a given lesson. When shared meaningfully, they become actual targets that students can see and direct their efforts toward. They are better able to

- Compare where they are with where they need to go;
- Set specific goals for what they will accomplish;
- Choose effective strategies to achieve those goals.

### **1.2.1. The Importance of Learning Targets for Classroom Assessment:**

The most effective teaching and the most meaningful student learning happen when teachers design the right learning target for today's lesson and use it along with their students to aim for and assess understanding. Educators focused on raising student achievement through formative assessment processes (Brookhart, Moss, & Long, 2009( 52–67), 2010( 41–58), 2011; Moss, Brookhart, & Long, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c( 66–69).

Learning targets should also determine whether and in what proportion assessments should be administered “on demand.” Assessment should be interactive and dynamic (Lunt, 1993). Before crafting any assessment procedures, teachers need to know what student outcomes they need to assess. They should have clearly in mind the students' performances they need to evaluate. If teachers are not clear on which important learning outcomes they want to evaluate, they may fail to assess these outcomes validly. (Nitko, 2004:17) .

There is emphasis on the need for a closer substantive connection between assessment and meaningful targets. Assessments must mirror important thinking and learning processes, especially modes of inquiry and discourse, as they are valued and practiced in the classroom. The purpose of assessment in classrooms must also be changed fundamentally so that it is used to help students learn and to improve instruction rather than being used only to rank students or to certify the end products of learning. Learning Targets play a central role to recognize if the assessment adequately covers and samples what teachers taught, correctly identify what students know/don't know, and their level of achievement (Nitko, 2004: 17) . The learning targets have values for the following aspects of classroom assessment:

1. The general planning for an assessment is made easier by knowing the specific outcomes teachers wish students to achieve.
2. Selecting and crafting assessment procedures depend on the teachers' knowledge which specific achievement teachers should assess.
3. Evaluating an existing assessment procedures teachers already crafted is easier when knowing the specific learning targets.
4. Properly judging the content relevance of an assessment procedures requires teachers to know the specific achievements teachers should assess. (ibid).

Learning Targets help students to assess and adjust what they are doing to get there as they are doing it and the substance of classroom assessments must be congruent with important learning goals.

### **1.3. Types of Learning Targets:**

**1. Knowledge Learning Target:** The facts and concepts we want students to know Either rote learned or retrieved using reference materials. It refers

to the mastery of substantive subject content where mastery includes both knowing and understanding it (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009:96).

Verbs used ( explain, understand, describe, identify, tell, name, list, define, label, match, choose, recall, recognize ), (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2006).

Examples:

Identify metaphors and similes

Read and write quadratic equations

Describe the function of a cell membrane

Know the multiplication tables

Explain the effects of an acid on a base.

**2.Reasoning Learning Target:** The ability of the student to use their knowledge to reason and solve problems. The ability to use knowledge and understanding to figure things out and to solve problems. It is the use and application of knowledge in novel situations.

Verbs used : analyze, compare–contrast, synthesize, classify, infer–deduce, evaluate.

(Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2006). Use statistical methods to describe, analyze, evaluate, and make decisions.

Reasoning Examples:

Make a prediction based on evidence.

Examine data/results and propose a meaningful interpretation.

Distinguish between historical fact and opinion.

**3.Skills:** The ability of the student to demonstrate achievement-related skills like conducting experiments, playing basketball, and operating computers. Performances must be observed.

Verbs: observe, focus attention, listen, perform, do , question, work, read, speak, assemble, operate, use, measure, model, explore

(Stiggins; Arter; Chappuis & Chappuis, 2006)

Examples:

Measure mass in metric and SI units

Use simple equipment and tools to gather data

Read aloud with fluency and expression

Participates in civic discussions with the aim of solving current problems

Dribbles to keep the ball away from an opponent.

**4.Product:** The ability of the student to create achievement-related products such as written reports, oral presentations, and art products.

Verbs: design, produce, create, develop, make, write, draw, represent, display, model, construct

(Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2006)

Exaples:

Construct a paragraph, Develop a personal health-related fitness plan ,Construct a physical model of an object ,Write a term paper to support a thesis.

**5.Affective:** The attainment of affective traits such as attitudes, values, interest and self-efficacy and students' attitudes about school and learning.

#### **1.4. Taxonomies of Educational Targets:**

Taxonomies of instructional learning targets are highly organized schemes for classifying learning targets into various levels of complexity .Generally, educational learning targets fall into one of three domains:

A. Cognitive domain

B. Affective domain

C. Cognitive domain .

(Kongwad,2007:246 - 250 , Mrunalini 2008: 68 , Nitko 2004: 22).

These three domains do not occur in isolation, they are interrelated as shown in figure No. (1):

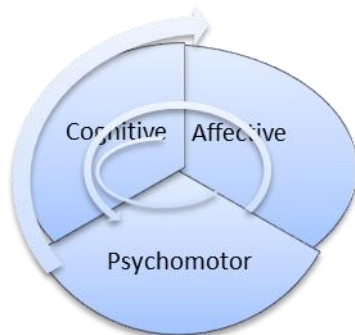


Figure (1) Domains of Educational Targets

#### **1.4.1. Cognitive Domain:**

A widely used method of classifying Learning Targets is the taxonomy of education .It has been first prepared by a group of college and university examiners in the cognitive domain and edited by Benjamin S. Bloom (Kongwad, 2007: 250).This taxonomy is a comprehensive outline of a range of cognitive abilities. This taxonomy classifies cognitive performances into six major headings arranged from simple to complex.

##### **1.4.1.1.Bloom' s Taxonomy:**

This taxonomy is a comprehensive outline of a range of cognitive performance into six major headings arranged from simple to complex(Nitko, 2004:23 ). It is concerned with knowledge outcomes , intellectual abilities and skills. It includes activities such as remembering and recalling , thinking ;the ability to think can range from simple recall of information to complex thinking behavior ,i.e., assimilation of information and evaluation .The major categories are:

**1. Knowledge:** refers to the simple recall of recognition of previously learned materials. This may involve the recall of terminology, basic principles, generalizations and specific facts such as dates, events, persons and places. This level focuses on the storage and retrieval of information in memory. (Mrunalini, 2008: 68).

Action verbs that might be used in this level include: define, identify, give, recall dates, find out, employ, inquire, classify categories or names, outline, state, (Kongwad, 2007: 250), label, select, describe, (Mrunalini, 2008: 68), (Nitko, 2004: 23)

Students can answer “who, what, when and where” (Thangasamy, 2008: 17)  
Example. The student will be able to define the terms: knowledge, application.

**2. Comprehension:** represents the first level of understanding, explain and summarize material for future (Mrunalini 2008: 68). It is the ability to grasp the meaning of material. It involves activities like translating one form to the other, interpreting, predicting future trends. (Kongwad 2007: 250) referring to a type of understanding or apprehension such that the individual knows what is being communicated without necessarily relating it to other material or seeing its fullest implication. (Nitko, 2004: 23). Action verbs that are used in this level are: translate, convert, generalize, rewrite, summarize, distinguish, infer, alter, explain, paraphrase, (Mrunalini, 2008: 69), predict a future, estimate the future sequence of data. (Kangwad, 2007: 250). Questions are usually characterized by words such as “how”, “why” (Thangasamy, 2008: 17).

Example. The student will be able to summarize a short story.

**3. Application:** The use of abstraction in particular and concrete situations (to solve new or novel problems). The abstraction may be in the form of general ideas, rules of procedure or generalized methods. (Nitko, 2005: 23). It is the ability to use learned material or information in new and concrete situations (Kongwad 2007: 250). Verbs of actions that could be used within this level include: use, operate, produce, change, solve, show, determine, compute, (Mrunalini 2008: 69).

Example: Giving a quadratic question, the student will be able to determine its two roots.

**4. Analysis:** refers to the break down of the material into its constituents parts or elements (Mrunalini 2008: 68, Kangwad 2007: 250, Nitko, 2005: 23). Verbs of action within this level are; discriminate, select, distinguish, separate, analyze, break down, identify, subdivide, compare) (Mrunalini 2008: 69).

Example. The student will be able to write the simplest elements of a chemical compound.



**5.Synthesis:** It is putting together the elements and parts so as to form a whole .This involves the process of working with pieces, parts, elements, etc.(Nitko,2005:24), Kongwad, 2007: 250).This is the ability to produce a unique communication , production of a plan or proposal of operations and development of a set abstract relations. It emphasizes on the creation of a new pattern or structure(Kongwad,2007:250).

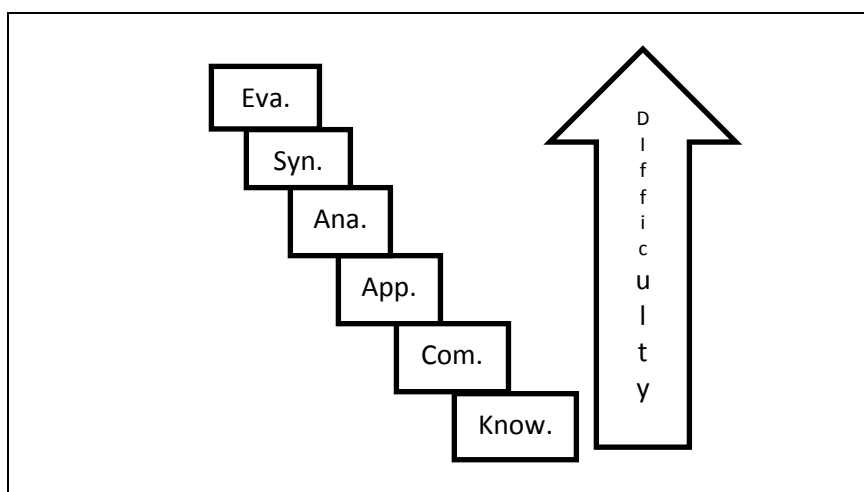
Verbs used are : design , plan, compile, compose , organize, conclude, arrange, construct, devise.

Example. Given a problem, the student will be able to propose at least two possible solutions to the problem.

**6.Evaluation:** Judgments about the value of material and methods for given purpose. Quantitative and qualitative judgments stated about the extent to which material and methods satisfy criteria. The criteria may be those determined by the students (internal) or those which are given to them (external) (Nitko,2005:24 );it is the highest order of learning in the cognitive hierarchy. This involves the elements of all the other categories along with value judgment( Kongwad ,2007: 250). Verbs used in this level may include the following: appraise, compare, justify, criticize, explain, interpret, conclude, summarize, evaluate (Mrunalini, 2008: 69).Evaluation questions are characterized by such words as ‘should, could, in your opinion, etc. (Thangasamy, 2008:17).

Example. By viewing a football match, the students will be able to rate the match in form of its skills and tactics required for it.

**Figure (2) Bloom’s Taxonomy and Levels of Difficulty:**



#### 1.4.2.Affective Domain

It is concerned with feelings .It includes the targets which describe the change in interests, attitudes ,appreciation and modes of adjustment (kangwad2007:251) .The targets in this domain are concerned with the

development of the students' attitudes, feelings and emotions .It is difficult to write targets of affective domain because the feelings, attitudes and emotions are hard to translate into overt observable behavior .( Mrunalini, 2008:71-72).David Krathwohl (1964) has developed a classification system or taxonomy for categorizing affective responses into five levels according to the degree of internalization (Mrunalini, 2008 :71-72) . The major categories include:

**1.Receiving** : can be defined as being aware and willing to attend freely to stimuli and messages in the environment(Ibid: 71-72) .In the teaching – learning situations ,they involve activities like getting, holding and directing students activities(Kongwad,2007,251). Action verbs are :follow, select, rely, choose, point to , ask, hold, give, locate, attend ( Mrunalini ,2008: 71-74)

Exapmle: A student must be attentive and must make a conclusion effort to pay attention to the classroom environment but rather to the stimuli.

**2.Responding**:refers to the student's active participation .Here ,the learner is not only concerned with attending or doing something but also reacting it to some way.(Ibid: 73, Kongwad 2007, 251). It involves physical, active behavior where students make choices about issues . Verbs used in this level are read, confirm, help, answer, practice , present, report, greet, tell, perform, assist , recite (Mrunalini 2008: 71).

Example: A student willingly helps others in doing their homework.

**3.Valuing**:refers to voluntarily giving worth to an idea ,phoneme, or stimulus .At this level, students show consistence and stable behavior.

Verbs that might be used in this level include :initiate , ask, invite, share, join, follow, read, study, work, accept, argue.

Example:A student shares the concerns about certain occasions.

**4 .Organization**: refers to the building an interestingly consistent value system. The individual takes on value positions and is willing to defend them.

Verbs of this level are: defend, alter, integrate , synthesize, listen, influence, adhere, modify, relate, combine.

Example. A students' philosophy of life has been internalized.

**5.Characterization by a value** ; implies that organization of inter relationship among various values into a total philosophy of world view.

At this level , an individual has a value system that controlled is behavior for a sufficiently long time for him.

Verbs used in this level include :Adhere, relate, act, serve, use, verify .

A value or value complex, =====question, confirm, propose, solve , influence.

### 1.4.3. Psycho motor Domain:

Objects or targets in this domain are related to perceptual and motor skills areas. It requires a higher order of thinking, ability and doing. It deals with areas involving varied types of muscular skills and coordination (Kongwad, 2007, 251). This domain is very useful and relevant in physical education, music, drama, art and courses. (Mrunalini, 2008: 71).

**Many attempts are made to present classifications of the targets or the objects of this domain.**

**First: Simpson (1972) classified the psycho motor domain as :**

**1. Perception** refers to the use of organs to obtain cues that guide motor activity.

**2. Set** means readiness to take a particular type of action. A learning situation requires the physical, mental and emotional readiness of the learner.

**3. Guided response** refers to the early stages in learning a complex skill. When a learner learns a complex skill drawing a diagram, he learns through imitation and trial and error.

**4. Mechanism:** is the process by which the learned response becomes more perfect and habitual.

**5. Complex overt response** refers to the skillful performance of motor acts that involve complex movement patterns.

**6. Adaptation** is the skill to adjust to the novel situation. It is the skills that are so well developed that the individual can modify movement patterns to fit special requirements or to meet a problem situation.

**7. Origination** refers to creative performance skills. It is the new movement pattern to fit a particular situation or specific problem (Kongwad, 2007, 260).

**Table ( 1 ) Summary of Taxonomy of Instrumental Targets(objects)**

Domain	Major categories
Cognitive	Knowledge Comprehension Application Analysis Synthesis Evaluation
Affective	Receiving Responding Valuing Organization Characterization by a value
Simpson's Psychomotor	Perception Set Mechanism Complex overt response Adaptation Origination

**Second: Harrow (1972) and Mullan(1977) presented a four level of taxonomy which can be seen as follows:**

**1.Fundamental movements:** are those that form the basic building blocks for the higher level movement .For example the ability to trace objects , grasp objects or crawl and walk.

Example:The student will be able to properly hold a tennis racket for the back hand.

**2.Generic Movements:** refers to the ability to carry out the basic rudiments of a skill even when giving directions under supervision. Awareness of the body in motion and arrangements and use of the body parts is learned.

**3.Ordinate movements :**marks the competence in performing a skill and independently. The skill is mastered and there is precision of performance.

Example:The child performs step by step.

**4.Creative Movements:** The individual will be able to invent unique motor options or improve originality into movement or combine several movements into a personal unique motor design or invent new movements.

Example:After giving a sequence of dance , the child will perform dance by incorporating its own personal talent.

**Third. Psysycho motor domain, according to Anita J.Harrow has several categories:**

**1.Reflex movements:**

spiral segment reflexes  
inter segment reflexes

Example: A student will be able to construct muscles.

**2.Perceptual abilities:** they address Kinesthetic, visual, auditory, tactile, coordination ability.

Example .A student will categorize by size.

**3.Fundamental movements behavior** related to walking, running, jumping ,pushing, manipulating.

Example:A student will jump over hurdle.

**4.Physical abilities :** endurance, strength, flexibility, reaction-response, dexterity.

**5.Skilled movements** are concerned with games ,sports, dances, acts.

Example: A student can create his own movement sequence.

**6.Non-discursive posture,** communication ,gestures ,facial expressions, creative movements.

Example : A student can create his own movement sequence. (Mrunalini, 2008:76-77).

**Table ( 2 ) The classification of Targets in the Psycho Motor according to Harrow (1972) and Mullan(1977) and Anita J.Harrow**

Harrow (1972) and Mullan(1977)	Anita J.Harrow
<b>Fundamental movements:</b>	<b>Fundamental movements</b>
<b>Generic Movements</b>	<b>perceptual abilities</b>
<b>Ordinate movements</b>	<b>Reflex movements</b>
<b>Creative Movements</b>	<b>Physical abilities</b>
	<b>skilled movements</b>
	<b>Non-discursive posture</b>

### 1.5 Criteria For writing Learning Targets:

Allen(1986:6-7) mentions that learning targets should be decided first in line with the overall aim of teaching programme and then should be selected and graded to meet these objects. They should be formulated hand in hand with the particular teaching situation which the teacher faces(Wilkins,1974:58).

The followings are minimum criteria for learning targets that ensure their usefulness as a basis for classroom instruments and crafting assessment (Lindvall,19964,1967 cited in Nitko, 2005:28).

**a.Student centered** : learning targets should focus on students and the changes in their performance.(Nitko,2005:28).They are most clearly captured in terms of what students will do Brown :150)

Example:Poor\_\_\_\_\_provide for students participations in classroom discussion .

Better\_\_\_\_\_ A student will participate in classroom discussion.

**b.Performance centred**: learning targets should state a performance that is an observable activity.This can be accomplished by being sure that the statements include an action verb that specifies a student performance .A balance is necessary between verbs that are too broad( and thus imply many nonequivalent performance) and those that are too specific and (which are often just ways of marking answers)

Example: Poor\_\_\_\_\_The student is able to put an x on the picture of the correct geometric shape (circle,rectangle ,triangle) when the name of the shape is given.

The learning targets is too specific.

Better\_\_\_\_\_ The student is able to identify a picture of a geometric shape (circle, triangle, rectangle ) when the name of the shape is given.

The following are some specific but acceptable verbs:

(Add ,total ,choose, complete, supply, make, construct, convert, count, delete ,describe, divide, draw, explain, identify, label, list, match, measure, multiply, name, order ,arrange, pick out, regroup, rename, rephrase, select, sort, state, weigh).

c. **content oriented** :The content should be indicated to which a student's performance is to apply when stating a learning targets.

Example: Poor\_\_\_ The student is able to write definitions of the important terms used in the text.

Better\_\_\_ The student is able to write definitions of the terms : analysis, application, Knowledge. (ibid)

## **SECTION TWO:ASSESSMENT:**

### **2.1.Assessment and its Techniques:**

Many attempts are made to define the term Assessment . Nitko (2005:5, Richard & Schmidt, 2002: 35, Carter & Nunan, 2001: 137) all agree that Assessment is a systematic approach to collect information .For Nitko (2005:5 ) about students, curricula , programs and educational policy , and for Richard & Schmidt,( 2002: 35) in making inferences about the ability of a student or achievement or the quality or success of a teaching course on the basis of various sources of evidence or about inferences about the ability of a student or achievement (Carter & Nunan, 2001: 137). Good (1973:1-3) regards Assessment as the process of official valuation of a property. Hornby (1974:46) identifies Assessment as deciding or fixing the value of a property for certain purposes. AL-Juboury (2000: 1) defines it as “a means of checking or measuring the general level of performance which is concerned with teaching and learning”.

From the previous definitions ,it can be concluded that assessment is a way to collect information about everything related to teaching and learning including the student, the teacher, syllabus and method of teaching ) , starting from the simplest start to design a lesson plan up to the educational policy of the state.

Assessment techniques include paper and pencil tests, formal and informal observations , homework, exercises and research papers, projects and exhibits performances portfolios, oral questioning and analysis of students' records. Several important principles guide the selection and use of particular assessment techniques include being clear about the learning targets , matching the assessment techniques , using multiple indicators of achievement and recognizing the limitations of each technique.(Nitko,2005:13)

### **2.2.The Use and Significance of Assessment:**

One use of assessment is to make inferences about abilities or attributes such as lexical knowledge ,sociolinguistic awareness , language aptitude or motivational orientation. Assessment can provide information about attributes of individual such as their weaknesses and strengths , their achievement in language course or their level of proficiency in a language.

The importance of assessment lies in its use of forming certain types of decisions. Assessment is used as a basis for making decisions about programs or about individuals, educational decisions or decisions about curricula and programs related to the district and national policy which include formative and summative evaluations.

Formative relating to making changes to improve an existing programs, summative relating to contribution on existing program or implementing a new program (Bachman, 2008:9\_12)

And to make decisions about individuals such as students' planning instruction activities,

placing students into learning processing,

monitoring students' progress and diagnosing learning difficulties,

it helps in offering evaluation for the purpose of feed back to the students about achievements and to the teachers whether in the effectiveness of their technique or assigning grades,

placing students into programs classifying students and credentialing or certifying them (Nitko 2005:13).

Bachman (2008:9-12) adds also decisions about individuals or students including:

selection for admission or employment,

placement diagnostic and certification.

## 2.2.Principles of Assessment:

**1.Validity:** A test is said to be valid if it measures accurately what is intended to measure (Hughes, 2003:26). In other words test what you teach and how you teach it. It is important to be clear about what we want to assess and then be certain that we are assessing that material not something else, making sure that clear assessment objectives are met is of primary importance in achieving test validity (Coombe et al, 2010: xxii) A valid test is one which an individual's score gives a true reflection of that individual's ability and the trait claimed to be measured (Jonson and Johnson, 1999:187).

Brown (2012:30) identifies valid test as one which doesn't measure irrelevant or contaminating variables, relies as much as possible on empirical evidence (performance), involves performance that samples the test's criterion (objective), offers useful meaningful information about a test taker's ability, is supported by a theoretical rationale or argument.

Validity has many types which are:

**a.Content validity** means the test assesses the course content and outcomes using formats familiar to the student (Coombe et al 2010:xxii). A test is said to have a content validity if its constituents is a representative sample of the language skills, structures, etc., with which it is meant to be

concerned. For instance, a grammar test must be made of items relating to the knowledge or control of grammar. A test has a content validity only if it includes a proper sample of the relevant structures. (Hughes 2003:26).

**b. Construct validity** refers to the fit between the underlying theories and methodology of language learning of the type of assessment: the matching of the approach with the principle in testing (Coombe et al: xxii).

**c. Face validity** refers to the degree to which a test looks right and appears to measure the knowledge or abilities it claims to measure, based on the subjective judgment of the examinees who take it, the administrative personnel who decide

on its use and other psychologically unsophisticated observers (Mousavi 2009: 247 cited in Brown 2010:33, *ibid*).

It remains a notion that cannot empirically be measured or theoretically justified under the category of validity as it is a purely subjective factor of the eye of the beholder (Bachman 1990:285-288).

**d. Consequential (Impact) Validity** encompasses all the consequences of a test, including such considerations as its accuracy in measuring intended criteria, its effect on the preparation of test takers and the (intended and unintended) social consequences of a test's interpretation and use (Brown 2010:34). The impact of test taking and the use of test scores can be seen at both a macro level (the effect on society and educational system) and a micro level (the effect on individual test takers) (Bachman and Palmer 1996:30).

**2. Reliability:** refers to the consistency of test scores which simply means that a test would offer similar results if it were given at another time (Coombe et al 2010:xiii).

A reliable test is consistent and dependent if the test is given to the same student or matched students on two different occasions, the test yields similar results (Brown 2010: 27)

There are several factors that affect test reliability such as the format and the content of the questions, the time given to the students to take the exam must be consistent (Coombe et al 2010;xxiii), uniform rubrics for scoring/evaluation, consistent application of the rubrics by the scorers.

**There are also factors that may cause unreliability, these are:**

**a. The Student:** A variety of changes may take place within the learner that may change a learner's true score from test to test: additional learning or forgetting, fatigue, sickness, emotional problems or practice effect (Coombe et al 2010:xxiii).

**b. Rate Reliability:** subjectivity in scoring or mechanical errors in the scoring process may introduce errors into scores and affect the reliability of



the test result within intra-rater or between inter-rater ,the raters themselves.

**c. Test Administration:** In consistent administrative procedures and testing conditions will reduce test reliability .This problem is most common in situations where different groups of students are tested in different locations on different days(Coombe etal 2010:xxiv).

Reliability focuses on the empirical aspects of the measurement process, validity focuses on the theoretical aspects and interweavers these concepts with the empirical ones(Davies etal 1999:169).And there is no validity without reliability.

**3. Practicality:** refers to the logistical, administrative issues involved in making , giving and scoring an assessment instrument.These include “costs the amount of time it takes to construct and to administer ,ease of scoring and interpreting and reporting the results(Mousavi 2009:518 cited on Brown 2010:26).

A practical test can be completed by the test takers within appropriate time constraints , has clear direction for administration, and it doesn't exceed available material resources(Brown 2010:26).

**4. Authenticity** refers to the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given test task to the features of a target language task(Bachman and Palmer 1996:23).A test is said to be authentic if it contains language that is as natural as possible , has items that contextualized rather than isolated , it includes meaningful, relevant ,interesting topics , offers tasks that replicate real world task(Brown 2010:37).

**5. Washback** refers to effect of testing on teaching and learning .It is generally said to be positive or negative. Negative effects of testing such as “test driven”, curricula and only studying and learning “what they need to know for the test”. Positive wash back (guided wash back) benefits teachers, students and administrative because it assumes that testing and curriculum design are both based on clear course outcomes that are known to both students and teachers(testers).Students should perceive these tests are markers for achieving the outcomes.(Coombe etal 2010:xxv).

### 2.3 Evaluation, Assessment, and Testing

A number of terms that are associated with Assessment are testing and Evaluation. Evaluation which involves making value judgments and decisions , can be understood as one possible use of assessment((Bachman,2005:9).It is all inclusive and is the widest basis for

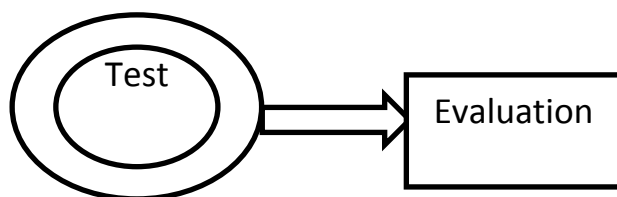
collecting information in teaching .It includes factors that influence the learning process(syllabus, objectives, course design and material behind the learners' achievement. It is the process of making a value judgment about the worth of some one or something .It may be based on information obtained from tests and other assessment(Nitko,2004:13).

Assessment is an ongoing process that encompasses a wide range of methodological techniques(Brown,2010:3).It is a process of collecting information on a learners' language ,ability or achievement. It is an umbrella term for all types of measures used to evaluate the students' progress.(Coombe etal,2010:xv).

Another term that needs to be clarified is test as assessment and test are often used interchangeably and tests are a subcategory of assessment and it is a genre of assessment techniques (Brown,2010:3) .Carroll(1968:46) defines test as “a procedure designed to elicit certain behavior from which one can make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual”. It is a prepared administrative procedure that occurs at identifiable times in a curriculum when learners muster all their faculties to offer peak performance knowing that their responses are being measured and evaluated (Brown , 2010:3) .They are instruments used for describing one or more characteristics of a student using either a numerical scale or a classification scheme (Nitko,2004:13).

In summary, evaluation includes the whole course or progaramme and information is collected from many sources including the learner .While assessment is related to the learners and their achievements ,testing is part of assessment and it measures the t learners' achievements.

**Figure (3) Relationships among assessment , test and their use for evaluation in different settings.**



### 2.3.1. Types and Purposes of Assessment

Different types of Assessment are used at various points throughout a language progress for various purposes .These types and their purposes areas follow:

**1.Pre-Course Assessment:** At the beginning of a course of a course, teachers usually want to ascertain the learners' ability to use a language for particular communicative goals regardless any instruction they may have had previously .For this purpose, **proficiency test** is

used (Nunnan, 2003:317). It assesses the overall language ability of students at varying levels. A typical level of a standardized proficiency test is the test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) produced by the Educational Testing Service (Brown, 2004:390) and IELTS which is intended for those who wish to study in United Kingdom and Australia (Coombe et al, 2008 : xvii). A proficiency test may also be used a **placement test** to sort learners into groups of similar proficiency level or as a selection test to ascertain whether a person has sufficient language proficiency to begin a particular course of study or to practice a given occupation (Nunnan 2003:317). In designing a placement test, the test developer may base the content either on a theory of general language proficiency or on learning targets of the curriculum (Coombe et al 2008:xvi).

The result of the proficiency assessment may be interpreted in two ways : **First**, the learners' scores or grades can be compared with each other and this is known as a **Norm-Reference** interpretation (Nunnan 2004:317). The purpose of this interpretation is to spread students out a long continuum of scores so that those with low abilities in ascertain skill are at one end of the normal distribution and those with high scores are at the other end with the majority of the students falling between the extremes (Brown, J.D. 2005:2). Such tests must have fixed predetermined responses in a format that can be scored mechanically at minimum expense. Cost and efficiency concerns in these tests (Brown 2010:8).

**Second:** The students' performance may be compared with an external standard or criterion which has already been defined such as a particular course targets or description of a performance (e.g. can give simple personal information). This is known as a **Criterion Referenced** interpretation (Nunnan 2004:317). Such tests are usually developed to measure how much learning has occurred. True C criterion referenced are devised before instruction is designed so that the test will match the teaching targets, as this will lessen the possibility that teachers teach to the test (Coombe et al 2010:xviii).

## **2. In Course Assessment:**

Once learning is under way, there is an intention to find out how much a student has learned in a particular unit of instruction, **Achievement tests** are used for this purpose (Nunnan 2004 : 318). The content of the achievement test is generally based on the specific course content or on the course targets. They are often summative (Brown 2010:9) cumulative, administrated at mid and ended point of the semester or academic year (Coombe et al 2008:xvii, ibid).

An informal way of keeping track of progress over a period of time is by giving Progress tests (Nunnan 2004:318) which measure the progress that students are making towards defined course or program goals are

administered at various stages throughout a language course to determine what students have learned (Coombe et al 2010:xvii). The results of these tests can be used to give students feedback on their progress in relation to the course targets and help them identify any areas where they might need to do more work (Nunan 2004:318). Used this way, the tests have a **Diagnostic** function. Such tests are designed to diagnose a particular aspect of language (Brown 2004:390). Another purpose of the Progress achievement is to motivate learners by allowing them the opportunity to determine what they have learned (Nunan 2004:318).

### 3. End of Course Assessment:

At the end of a period of instruction, teachers will usually need to report the learners' achievement to external authority (e.g. At the end of a school term). This is known as **Summative assessment**. For this purpose, final **Achievement** test would be used (Nunan 2004:318). **Summative assessment**, then, aims to measure or summarize what a student has grasped and to determine whether the students have achieved the course targets (Coombe et al 2008:xiv).

On the other hand, **Formative assessment** which refers to evaluating students in the process of formatting their competencies and skills given during a course and feedback is provided to students with the aim of using the results of tests to improve the learning process (Coombe et al 2008:xix, Brown 2010:7).

The last type of test is Aptitude which measures the capacity or general ability to learn a foreign or a second language (Coombe et al 2008:xvi). It predicts a person's future success and it is considered to be independent of a particular language (Brown 2010:11).

Within each of the previous categories of assessment and tests, there are a variety of different possible techniques and procedures. These range from:

- objective to subjective scoring procedures,
- open-ended to structural response options,
- multiple-choice to fill in blanks item design formats,
- written or oral performance modes (Brown 2004:391).

### 2.3.2. Types of Alternative Assessment

Several types of alternative assessment can be used with great success in today's language classrooms:

- Self-assessment,
- Portfolio assessment,
- Student-design tests,
- Learner-centered assessment,
- Projects,
- Presentations.

**Table ( 3 ) Common types of language assessment .**

Informal	Formal
Classroom,* <sup>1</sup> “low stakes”	Standardized*“high stakes’
Criterion -referenced	Norm _referenced
Achievement	Proficiency
Direct	Indirect
Subjective	Objective
Formative	Summative
Alternative ,authentic	Traditional

**Table (4) Common Test Types:**

Test Type	Main Purpose
Placement test	Place students at appropriate level of instruction within program
Diagnostic test	Identify students’ strengths and weaknesses for remediation
Progress test or in-course tasks	Provide information about mastery of difficulty with course materials
Achievement test	Provide information about students’ attainment of course outcomes at end of course or within the program
Standardized test	Provide measure of students’ proficiency using international benchmarks

## 2.4. Matching Learning targets with the Assessment Tasks:

A model for classroom assessment based on writing specific learning objects or targets is elaborated, for the substantive reform of assessment and for its use in classrooms to support learning. The sample is based on Bloom’s taxonomy and basically on the cognitive domain .Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice is a story used to be taught in the Iraqi schools for the 6th preparatory stage few years ago and it is used here as a model of how to match learning targets and the assessment items.

### 1.Knowledge:

A sample Learning target: Recall the main characters in section one in merchant of Venice.

A sample assessment item :List the names of all the characters in section one.

### 2.Comprehension :

A sample Learning target: Explain the main ideas and themes of merchant of Venice.

<sup>1</sup> Low stakes tests are those in which the results have a relatively minor impact on the lives of the individual or on small Program. In class progress tests or short quizzes are examples of low stakes .High Stakes tests are those in which the results are likely to have a major impact on the lives of large numbers of individuals or on large program. For example , the TOEFL.( Coombe etal2008:xix)

Sample assessment item: Tell me using your own words what was the story about?

### **3.Application :**

A sample Learning target : Relate the personal problems of the characters in merchant of Venice to problems that real people face.

A sample assessment item: Is the problem Jessica had with her father similar to problems you or someone you know have with her father? Explain why ?or why not?

### **4.Analysis:**

A sample learning target: Identify the literary devices that the author used to convey the character's feelings to the reader.

A sample assessment item: Portia was upset with her husband as well as Nerissa .what words and phrases did the author use to show how upset these characters were? Explain and give examples.

### **5.synthesis:**

A sample Learning target :Describe the general approach that characters used to solve their problems successfully.

In merchant of Venice characters were able to solve the personal problems she\he faced.

A sample assessment item :What were the ways these characters tried to solve their problems ? what do theses successfully ways to solve problems have in common?

### **6.Evaluation**

A sample Learning target: Develop one's own set of three or four criteria for judging the quantity of a short story.

A sample assessment item: what are the traits that make a short story high quality?

Use the traits to develop three criteria that you could use to evaluate the quantity of any story.

### **Conclusion:**

It is concluded that learning targets are student-friendly descriptions—via words, pictures, actions, or some combination of the three—of what teachers intend students to be able to do or value or feel after they have been taught in a given lesson.

Based on the conducted data (the learning targets and assessment), certain points of significance have arisen. The most important conclusions are:

1.In teaching English, targets should be clearly stated and the most effective teaching and the most meaningful student learning happen when teachers design the right learning target for the lesson and use it along with their students to aim for and assess understanding.

2. The quality of both teaching and learning is enhanced when we have clear targets to help teachers recognize if the assessment adequately covers and samples what they taught. This will result in correct identification of what students know/don't know, and their level of achievement .

3. There must be emphasis on the need for a closer substantive connection between assessment and meaningful targets. Classroom assessments must be congruent with important learning targets.

4. The purpose of assessment in classrooms must also be changed fundamentally so that it is used to help students learn and to improve instruction rather than being used only to rank students or to certify the end products of learning and to promote meaningful learning that raises student achievement. To reach a destination, teachers need to know exactly where they are headed, plan the best route to get there, and monitor their progress along the way.

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**Appendix 1:****The Summary of Merchant of Venice:**

The Merchant of Venice opens on a street in Venice where Antonio, a Venetian merchant, complains of a sadness he can't quite explain. His friends suggest they'd be sad too if they had as much merchandise to worry about as Antonio. Apparently all of his money is tied up in various sea ventures to exotic locales. But Antonio is certain it's not money that's bothering him.

Antonio's friend Bassanio enters the scene, and we learn that Bassanio has been at the forefront of Antonio's mind. Apparently Bassanio just got back from a secret trip to see an heiress named Portia in Belmont. Bassanio financed his trip (and in fact, his entire lifestyle) by borrowing tons of money from Antonio. Portia is beautiful, intelligent, and, most important, rich. If Bassanio could only get together the appearance of some wealth, he would be in a good position to compete with all the other guys vying for Portia's attention. If they marry, he's all set financially. Antonio would be happy to lend Bassanio the money he needs to woo Portia, except, as we know, all of Antonio's money is at sea. The two friends part ways, agreeing that they'll try to raise the funds on Antonio's credit around town.

Meanwhile, even rich heiresses have their troubles. Portia is plagued by suitors from the four corners of the earth but isn't allowed to choose the one she wants. Instead, her father, before his death, devised an unusual test. Three caskets—one gold, one silver, and one lead—are laid out before each suitor, and whoever picks the right one gets the girl. (It sounds like a twist on Goldilocks and the Three Bears.) Portia complains about all of the important men who come to see her, as there's something wrong with each of them.

As Portia is trying to figure out how to avoid marrying, Bassanio is trying to figure out how to marry her. He negotiates with the Jewish moneylender, Shylock, asking for 3,000 gold coins (ducats). Bassanio borrows the money on his friend Antonio's credit. Trouble is, Antonio is an anti-Semite (he is prejudiced against Jewish people) and is offensive to Shylock whenever he has the chance.

Slyly, Shylock says he'll try out Antonio's method of business by lending him the money interest-free. But, this is on the condition that Antonio signs a bond promising that if the debt goes unpaid, Antonio will give Shylock a pound of his own flesh. This seems like a good idea at the time (um, it does?) as Antonio is sure he'll have earned the money from his ships before Shylock's due date.

Before we have time to think about what a crazy idea it is to promise anyone a pound of your flesh, we're back at Belmont learning the rules of the casket game. Choose wrong, and not only do you fail to get Portia, but

you cannot marry anyone for the rest of your life. We see suitors fail when they choose the wrong caskets.

Meanwhile, Jessica (Shylock's only child) tells us that living in Shylock's house is pure hell and that she's ashamed to be his daughter. Ouch. She has decided to elope with Lorenzo and convert to Christianity. Jessica gets her chance to carry out her rebellious scheme when her dad leaves the house to go to dinner. As soon as he is out the door, Jessica steals off with her lover, Lorenzo, and helps herself to a chunk of Dad's cash.

Bassanio and some of his pals set off for Belmont in hopes that Bassanio will snag the beautiful and rich Portia.

We also learn from some gossipy cats in Venice that Shylock was livid when he learned his daughter ran away, screaming "My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter! / Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!" (2.8.15-16). (Check out the priorities here—he's about as angry about the fact his gold is gone as he is about the fact his bouncing baby girl is gone.) This is good news for Antonio, who hates Shylock. But Antonio doesn't stay happy for long, as he is too busy recovering from the fact that Bassanio has gone off to woo Portia.

Back in gossipy Venice, we hear that Antonio's ships have been sinking left and right. Shylock shows up, still mad about his daughter's rebellion, but he's excited to hear that he'll get to take a pound of flesh from his enemy Antonio. He explains to the gossipy men that he hates Antonio because Antonio hates him for being Jewish. Shylock then gives a beautiful speech in defense of the humanity of Jews, including the well-known line "if you prick us, do we not bleed?"

He concludes that a Jew is not unlike a Christian, and a Christian in this situation would seek revenge. Therefore, he will do the same, because the Christians have taught him hatred with their cruelty. Shylock is further angered to hear reports that his daughter is off lavishly spending his money, so he sets up arrangements to have Antonio jailed, cut, and killed.

Back in Belmont, Portia is batting off the men. But she is truly excited by Bassanio. Bassanio impressively chooses the lead casket (correct!) and wins Portia and her wealth. Portia is falling all over herself with love for Bassanio when Lorenzo and Jessica arrive with news that Antonio is about to die at Shylock's command. Portia offers to pay off Antonio's debt, and she and Bassanio have a quick (as in shotgun-quick) wedding before she sends Bassanio back to Venice with twenty times the debt owed to Shylock. Portia gives Bassanio a ring and makes him promise never to take it off, which we're sure is going to be significant sometime soon.

Meanwhile, Portia has hatched a plan to cross-dress and pose as a lawyer to argue Antonio's defense at his trial. She tells Lorenzo to look after her

house, disguises herself and Nerissa as men, and sets off for Venice in a hurry. Also, Graziano randomly marries Nerissa.

The scene moves to the court in Venice. Everyone has tried to plead with Shylock, but he won't hear reason. He wants justice, and that means having a pound of Antonio's flesh, as promised. It seems there's no hope until a young, effeminate-looking man shows up who happens to be a learned lawyer. He is called Balthazar (a.k.a. Portia).

Portia (as Balthazar) then begins to argue that Shylock should have mercy on Antonio, as mercy is a higher order good than justice. Shylock says he doesn't need mercy, he's fine with just justice, thank you very much. There's no way anyone can get around it—Antonio signed the bond, the Duke won't bend the rules, and Shylock won't relent. Antonio doesn't care if he dies. Bassanio says he wishes he could trade his wife and his life for Antonio's, which does not please his wife, but she doesn't say anything because she's disguised in drag.

Portia (as Balthazar) gets Antonio ready to go under the knife, but she stops just short as Shylock is sharpening his knife. She says the bond entitles Shylock to a pound of flesh, but if he spills a drop of Christian blood, then he'll be guilty of plotting to murder a Venetian Christian, the penalty for which is losing everything he has. Shylock says something like, "Fine, just give me the three-times-the-debt cash you offered me earlier," and Portia replies, "Actually, that offer's not on the table anymore." Then he says, "Okay, just give me the 3,000 back," and she returns, "Actually, that's not on the table either."

The slippery downward slope continues until Shylock declares that, fine, he'll just leave, and Portia stops him and says since he conspired to kill a Venetian he actually has to forfeit everything he owns. And beg for his life. Finally holding the upper hand, Antonio decides that as punishment, Shylock has to sign an agreement saying that when he dies, all his money will go to Jessica and her new Christian husband. Also, Shylock must convert to Christianity. Shylock leaves a totally broken man.

Portia grabs Nerissa and tries to get home before the men return and find out their wives were the ones in court that day. Antonio and Bassanio try to get Balthazar to accept a gift before he goes, and though Portia (as Balthazar) tries to refuse it, the men press her. She asks for Bassanio's ring (which is really her ring, symbolizing their marriage trust). Bassanio refuses to give it to her, but then Antonio suggests he's whipped and foolish, so Bassanio caves in and gives Balthazar the ring at the last minute. Finally everyone gets home to Belmont; the women have narrowly arrived before the men. Nerissa launches into a fight with Graziano about the missing ring (as it turns out, she also gave a ring symbolizing marital fidelity), accusing him of giving it to a woman. Portia then lights into

Bassanio for the same thing. Portia complains about the men breaking faith for this lawyer guy, and she pledges to sleep with this learned man too, breaking her marriage vows like Bassanio did by giving up her ring.

Antonio has come home to Belmont with them and he feels responsible for the fights. To make up for it he promises his soul as a guarantee that Bassanio will be faithful to Portia. Portia accepts the offer of Antonio's soul and she gives him a ring to give to Bassanio. Turns out it's the original ring. Portia explains that she and Nerissa were the young lawyer and the clerk who rescued Antonio from Shylock. Also, she's got a letter that says some of Antonio's ships have come home with cash after all. The play ends with happiness for most of the characters in the play—all except Shylock.