

USING MEC FOR ASSESSMENT

Section 1

How to make use of the Markbook

1.1 Introduction

There are many good reasons to include MEC work as part of course assessment.

1.1.1 The MEC materials in your course have been designed to match up with other work at each stage of your classroom course.

MEC has been designed to fit seamlessly into your course assessment programme. Whether your school is using the standard MEC courses or bespoke courses created by your school's MEC administrator, the resources available will always match the main coursework for your class. Because MEC work can be matched to other coursework stage for stage, it is easy for the learners' MEC scores to form part of formal assessment.

1.1.2 MEC's Markbook system is flexible enough to give you the kind of information you need to suit the way you assess your course.

Your assessment programme will depend very much on the kind of course you're teaching and the goals your learners are aiming to achieve. For example, you may be teaching a course where grammar work is the main focus. In this case, you will want to view scores for MEC Language Exercises as part of ongoing assessment. In another scenario, you may not want to see detailed scores for every resource. It may be sufficient for you simply to see that learners have covered core coursework by the end of the course. The data in the MEC Markbook can cater for these different approaches to assessment.

1.1.3 MEC's Markbook system will enable you to monitor all your learners' MEC work.

The Markbook stores both Course Marks and Practice Marks so that you can set reinforcement or extension work outside of your learners' MEC courses, and assess that work also.

1.1.4 Learner data is recorded instantly and is available at any time.

Because MEC work is scored instantly, the learners don't have to wait for you to mark and return it, and you don't have to wait to get all assignments in from your learners before you start grading. In addition, you don't have to be at school in order to access data about your learners' progress. You can get this information from anywhere you have Internet access by logging on to MEC.

1.1.5 MEC takes much of the administrative burden off teachers.

MEC keeps the records for you, so all you need to do is add those to the records of the other coursework your learners do. All scores are quoted in percentages, making them easy to adapt to whatever system your school uses. In addition, the Markbook data can be exported. This means you can just copy and paste results into your own standard end of term reports for learners and parents. (For exporting marks see [Part 1, Section 8.4.4](#).)

1.2 Deciding on how to integrate MEC into course assessment

This is something that your institution will have to decide in consultation with you and other colleagues. However, below are a few suggestions for ways in which MEC can become a part of the assessment process. Most of these suggestions refer to different Markbook views available in MEC. If you're not sure how to use the Markbook, see [Part 1, Section 8](#) for more details.

1.2.1 Class Profiles

The MEC Markbook can provide you with information about the progress of the class as a whole. You can quickly check if they are covering the set course material. You can also check to see what common areas of difficulty are emerging, allowing you to decide on appropriate remedial work for the class.

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■ Monitoring course material covered

Use the Syllabus item overview screen ([Part 1, Section 8.4.1.2](#)) to get an ‘at a glance’ view of how your class is progressing through the syllabus items of the course. Remember the colour code for syllabus item boxes is as follows:



From this, you can understand if the class is generally moving at the pace you want. You might want to project this view to the whole class occasionally – it can be motivating for learners to see how much they have covered, and it can be reassuring for individuals to see that their peers are moving at the same pace as they are.

1.2.2 Learner Profiles

■ Progress checking

MEC tracking data in the Markbook allows you to build up a picture of how each individual learner is progressing and where their particular strengths and weaknesses lie. This provides you with the quantitative data which will support the qualitative data you will have accrued from observing their performance in class.

■ Checking participation

Use the Class overview screen ([Part 1, Section 8.4.1.1](#)) to get a bar chart comparison of how much of the assigned MEC work each learner in the class has done. Remember, these bar charts don’t indicate scores, but simply if resources have been complete or not. This view allows you to identify quickly learners who are falling behind and those who are moving too quickly through material.

Individual strengths and weaknesses

Use the detailed Markbook resources screen ([Part 1, Section 8.4.2](#)) for each syllabus item to see learners’ actual scores for each resource. Don’t forget that you can filter results using the ‘View’ drop-down menu to check a learner’s results for particular resource types (Listening Activity, Language Exercise, etc). Look also for progress in a particular area by comparing scores for resources with the dates they were completed.

Learning strategies

In addition to participation and attainment, you will want evidence that learners are approaching their language learning in a structured and organized way. You will want to see that they are doing something to address their weak areas and not just working on areas that they are already confident in. You will also want to see that there is some ‘recycling’ of learning going on. The various views and data in the Markbook will help you to put together a learning strategy profile of this kind for each learner. For example:

- Use the Syllabus item overview screen ([Part 1, Section 8.4.2.1](#)) to see that a learner is working on resources in a logical order and is completing one syllabus item before moving on to another.
- Use the Markbook resources screen ([Part 1, Section 8.4.2](#)) to:
 - Check that learners are making several attempts at each resource and that they are revisiting the same resources even after having moved on to new syllabus items.
 - Check dates to see if learners are spacing out their study time or are ‘cramming’ before lessons or towards the end of term.
 - Check that learners are spending time on resources you have advised them are necessary in order to strengthen certain language areas.

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Section 2

How to use tests

2.1 Tests and formal 'summative' assessment

The MEC resource bank includes a number of language tests at each level. Some are general language tests suitable for the level, while others focus on specific language areas. These tests can be included in MEC courses and used as part of the formal assessment process. If you include tests in courses, scores will be recorded in the Markbook.

The advantage of using MEC tests in this way is that it saves you time preparing, marking and collating tests yourself. However, it is worth bearing in mind the following if you or your institution is considering this approach:

- To be valid as achievement tests they must tie in closely with coursework. Because the content of MEC tests is preset and cannot be selected by you, you will need to ensure that coursework covers the language areas of the tests you wish to use. If this is not the case, talk to your local MEC administrator about how to adapt the course in order to match course resources with achievement tests.
- The language tests can be used as valid proficiency tests at the mid-point or end of a course. However, they ought to be used in conjunction with other, non-MEC skills tests for speaking, reading and writing.
- Whether as achievement tests or proficiency tests, make sure learners do them in a monitored situation. If you ask learners to complete tests in their own time, this obviously raises questions about test validity which you will have to take into consideration.

Finally, remember also that the tests are useful for diagnostic purposes. You can ask learners to complete tests which are not included in their courses and are therefore recorded in the Practice Marks section of their Markbook. Used in this way, they can be a valuable tool for learners' self-assessment. See [Part 3, Section 2](#) for more details.

2.2 Portfolio approach to assessment

An alternative, or complement, to summative assessment is for learners to put together a portfolio of MEC work. The main features of this approach are as follows:

- Learners choose, either by themselves or with your guidance, the resources which they wish to complete.
- They devise a work plan, either by themselves or with your guidance, outlining target dates for completion of coursework 'chunks'.
- Learners compile evidence of work done over the term. This can include MEC scores recorded in the Markbook (both for their course and for extra Practice Marks), a Web Project presentation, Word Lists and Web Link lists completed, and Bookmark lists which show evidence of 'strategic' independent learning.
- Some portfolio work – such as Web Projects – can be done in collaboration with other learners.
- Portfolios are presented for final assessment towards the end of the course.

The advantages of this approach are that assessment becomes more closely linked to the learning process and that it also gives learners a greater degree of autonomy to decide how to organize their learning and what they should cover.

To allow this element of choice, however, there need to be enough MEC resources built into the course – more than any single learner would normally be required to do. This will allow learners the freedom to search for and choose resources and still have them graded in the Markbook.

If you wish to adopt a portfolio approach to assessment, speak to your local MEC administrator about adapting your MEC course to include a wider range of resources. Alternatively you can publish a variety of 'bookmark paths' for your learners to explore; the marks for resources are stored within the Practice Marks area of the Markbook.