Classroom Stories and Solutions
A Focus on Formative Assessment
EPISODE 2

This video series from TREE focuses on assessment in the classroom. We look at problems and solutions for assessing primary and secondary learners based on educational theory and practical methods teachers can try.

Classroom Problem

"I'm nervous because of a test tomorrow. It's a maths test. I don't like it when it's quiet. I failed the last 3 tests, what if I fail again? I'm not very good at writing. Why can't I just draw a picture instead? I'm good at drawing! I don't really understand what my teacher taught me. Why do I have to do it?"

Testing can be motivating for some learners. However, pressure to do well can be stressful, not only for children, but for parents and teachers. These feelings can negatively affect a child's ability to understand questions, and ability to perform their best in a test.
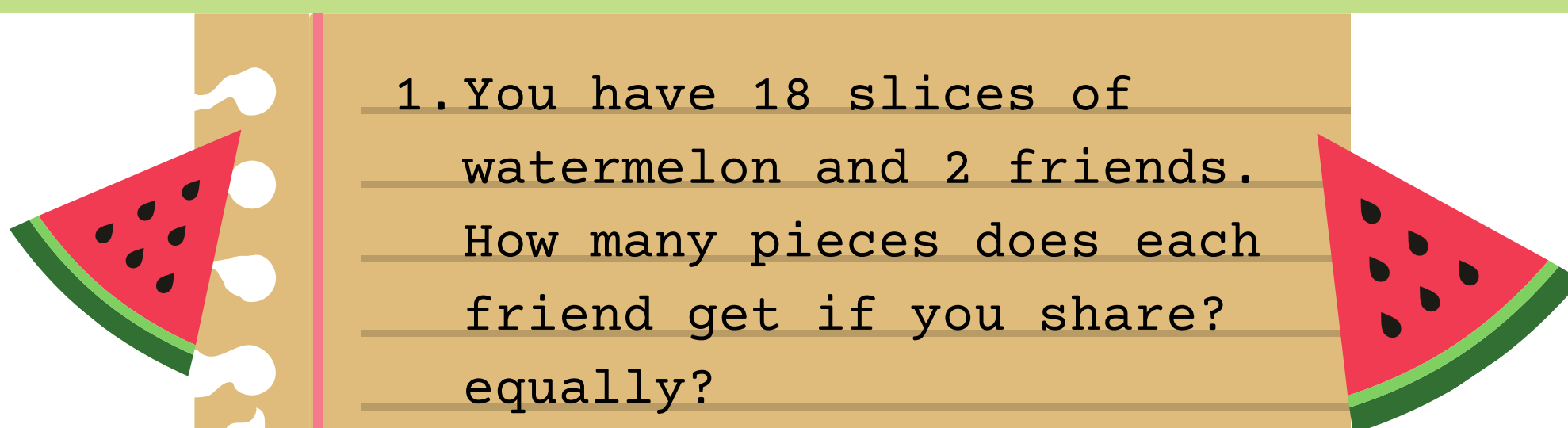
How can we create a more positive experience for children to help them perform better on tests?

5 TIPS FOR CHILD-FRIENDLY TESTS

1 Make the test instructions clear for every activity. Give an example to prompt the child in the right direction.

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Circle one answer A, B or C.
        e.g. A(B)C
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2 Make the situations relevant for the students' age and view of the world.

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1.You have 18 slices of
  watermelon and 2 friends.
  How many pieces does each
  friend get if you share?
  equally?
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3 Make the test questions similar to classroom activities so learners are more confident about answering them. Test what they have learned to do in class.

This is like what we did in class!

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4 Make it clear what you are testing them on, and let them know how they can do well in the tests.

Maths – counting skills

Science – categorising animals

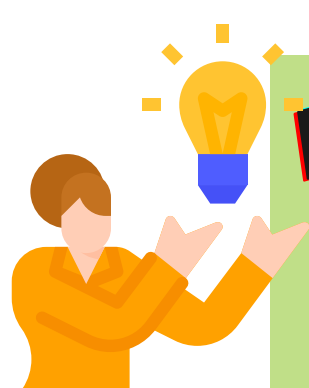Myanmar – reading skills

English – talking about weather

5 Explore alternatives to traditional ways of testing. Could you make the assessment more informal or more formative?

INFORMAL ASSESSMENT IDEAS

- pair work
- group work
- quizzes
- projects

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IDEAS

- break a large test down into smaller tasks
- do smaller tests during the course rather than at the end
- give learners a chance to improve by giving them clear feedback

REFLECT
Which tip do you find most useful?
Have you tried any informal or formative assessment methods with your classes?
How will you make your tests more child friendly?