Planning the Assessment

8.1 WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?

Assessment is the process of finding out how much each student knows or can do. The word assessment is used instead of 'examinations' because assessment can include all sorts of less formal methods of testing as well as the formal examination.

8.2 WHY IS ASSESSMENT NECESSARY?

There are three main reasons why students should be assessed. These are as follows.

(i) To Certify the Student

In all types of health care, the health care workers can save or prolong life and they can make the environment safer and healthier. But if health workers are incompetent, they can kill or injure patients and can make the environment more dangerous. So there is a clear need to make sure that every health worker is sufficiently competent to be of benefit to the community before he or she is allowed to practise as a recognised health worker. This process of certifying a student as competent to provide health care is one of the key functions of assessment.

(ii) To Guide Students and Teachers

During a course students may have failed to understand an idea or failed to reach a suitable standard of skill. Ideally they should realise this weakness as soon as possible so that they can work to remedy their specific weaknesses.

Similarly, a teacher may have confused most of the students in a group or may have taught a skill in such a way that the students are still not competent. Again it would be valuable if the teacher realised that things had gone wrong so that the lesson could be taught again in such a way that the errors could be corrected.

In both these examples, regular assessment can be used to detect what teaching or learning had to be repeated and so provide guidance to both students and teachers. Assessment can in this way provide some 'quality control' and so help to improve the quality of both teaching and learning.