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ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT IN TEACHING EFL

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Assessment is one of the most significant component of the learning process. Assessment is “appraising and estimating the level or magnitude of some attribute of a person”. It is an ongoing process that encompasses a wide range of methodological techniques [1, 3]. Assessment enables educational process to lead to some results in students’ performance. Assessment is crucial as well as for teachers to report students’ grades and assess learners’ achievement and for students to assess their progress. There is no progress without assessment. There are many types of assessment in teaching methodology: standardized, formative, summative, portfolio-based assessment, task-based assessment, performance-based assessment and etc. The interest in using various forms of classroom assessment has affected the paradigm shift in education, both in general and in teaching English in particular that resulted in formation of alternative assessment.

Alternative assessment utilizes activities that indicate a student’s is capability of doing a task through language, emphasizing his strengths. G. Ghaith defines alternative assessment as a means that gathers evidence of how students process, approach and accomplish real life task in the lan-

guage[2]. Alternative assessment tools are not only designed and structured as traditional forms of assessment, they evaluate learners differently. The reason for this is the fact that alternative assessment is based on performance. H.D. Brown distinguishes the features of alternative assessment: continuous long-term assessment, interactive performance, provides individualized feedback, oriented to process, fosters intrinsic motivation [1, 18]. The assessment assists teachers to focus on the purpose of learning a language is communication for specific purposes.

Alternative assessment doesn't use paper or test assessment as traditional assessment. This type of assessment focuses on what the student can do, focusing not on the weaknesses, but on the strengths, especially how a student performs and shows skills at exams. Furthermore, the assessment reflects the curriculum being taught and provides a holistic picture of the student's abilities and emphasizes the skills a student still needs to work on instead of counting the number of correct and incorrect answers as in traditional one. This assessment enables a student to have a chance to demonstrate the full depth and volume of study without limits. Most often, alternative assessment is used for students with disabilities who have difficulty performing standard tests.

The following formats are used for alternative assessment:

Essay. If a student has any difficulties in standard verbal performance, then writing an essay could be the best way to express his ideas, thoughts, and an indicator of the acquired skills. An essay can also show what a student thinks about a particular topic in the smallest detail, which is impossible in other types of assessment.

Portfolio. In most cases, it is used as a final control of all the work done during the entire course or semester. Portfolio is an indicator of the progress of the student, the development of his skills throughout the entire learning process. A teacher can create a portfolio of student essays or essays, labs, or other activities that demonstrate learning outcomes. Portfolio, as a rule, is attached to specific learning objectives, and includes its reflective part. Web 2.0 features allow students to create and share their portfolios in real time online.

Presentations, demonstrations are activities that enable the teacher to observe the development of the students' skills he teaches. For instance, a science exhibition is one of the types of alternative assessment, as well as choir performances. Thus, a teacher of mathematics can assign students to design a bridge based on the hypothetical dimensions he has provided [3].

Authentic assessment – a way that attempts to create a real environment or conditions close to the natural environment for students, so that they have a chance to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. A biology teacher, for example, can instruct students to identify various pollutants entering the local river in order to provide this information to local environmental protection agencies as genuine.

In the process of learning, people gain knowledge, acquire skills and develop work habits, and utilize them in real life situations. Learning and performance assessment are a set of strategies for acquiring and applying knowledge, skills and work skills through performing tasks that are meaningful and attractive to students [4]. Due to the change in the way of life of a person and modernization, the content part of the education has changed – “what to learn”, but the technology of teaching- “how to teach” has been affected significantly by these changes. For many teachers, it is still unacceptable when a student openly express opinions and prove his point of view to enter into discussion with a teacher. The notion of “discipline in class” has definitely changed. Now it has a completely different understanding - this is an organized purposeful activity of students, aimed at finding new knowledge, at identifying new methods of action, at their application and refinement. New knowledge in the classroom students acquire in pairwork or groupwork when it is vital to use discussion, agreement in views, and even disputes, evidence. And only in this interaction the student becomes the subject of learning, interested in self-improvement, self-development, and self-education. This is exactly what new technologies in teaching are aimed at. Alternative assessment can be a great solution for any teacher to keep up with the time and help the student meet personal needs and develop all the abilities and skills necessary in the world of modernization and computerization.

When using alternative assessment, teachers need methods that allow them to evaluate students fairly and objectively [3]. Frequently they refer to the so-called rubrics. The rubric is a guide for evaluating non-standard tasks such as portfolios and presentations [5]. The rubrics determine the quality of work on the task and its criteria. For example, a rubric may represent such a requirement for writing an essay as the content, organization, coherence and etc. Additionally, rubrics are very convenient for the students themselves when evaluating peers. In general, a rubric is a measure of the quality of work based on established criteria [3].

There are 4 main rubrics for alternative assessment:

1. General rubrics analyze the quality of work in general. Each score represents the overall impression of the work. The rubrics emphasize what the student is doing well.

2. Analytical rubrics – analyze the quality of work in detail (content, organization, lexicon, grammar, etc.). This type of rubrics provides the most detailed information about the weaknesses and strengths of the student.

3. Rubrics of the primary criterion - here the teacher defines the most important criterion for the successful completion of a task. This type of rubrics allows the student and teacher to focus on one aspect.

4. Multiple criteria rubrics - the type of rubrics, contrary to the rubrics of the primary criterion, requires the student to pay attention to a list of criteria for obtaining a successful result.

Alternative assessment finds its application in classes of English course “Basic foreign language in terms of intercultural communication (B1 level)” for second year students. The format of the assessment is presentation on completion of a unit. According to the topics of syllabus that corresponds to the standard curriculum (2016) for undergraduate students majoring in 5B011900 “Foreign language: two foreign languages” students are supposed to cover 3 major themes: “Nature and human beings”, “Health and fitness” and “Culture an art”. The format of one of subtopic’s task is presentation that reveals how well a student can perform communicative skills regarding proper use of vocabulary on topic and covered grammar. For instance, the topic for a completion of unit is “Ecological problems of my native town and their solutions”. Criteria for presentation are based on analytical rubrics.

Presentation is an activity that enables teachers to observe learner’s progress, strengths and consider where provide further scaffolding. For students it helps to demonstrate skills, to use English in special purposes, to be involved in evaluation because they are provided with rubrics beforehand. The activity can be used with students at the low-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced levels of language proficiency. The procedure for this activity is as follows: 1. Assign students an individual task. 2. Hand out rubrics (organization, vocabulary, grammar, delivery). 3. Hand out requirements for presentation slides and speech limit 4. Provide feedback and peer-feedback focusing on strong points.

To conclude, we have defined the term ‘alternative assessment’ as evaluation of acquired language skills and knowledge of a learner that currently meets the needs in modern society. Moreover, we have identified factors that have contributed to alternative assessment. Students through an alternative assessment learn independently to assess their abilities, their positive aspects and identify the level and development. Alternative assessment should take place in the educational process because students make real use of English, demonstrate the acquired skills, get involved in their own evaluation, take responsibility for learning, develop motivation to learn and use the target language, display their progress. We have considered the format alternative assessment utilizes, i.e. portfolios, presentations, demonstrations, essays. Additionally, we have enumerated rubrics the assessment bases on. Finally, we have proposed an activity in the framework of alternative assessment that can be utilized by teachers of foreign language in various educational institutions.

Literature

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