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ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT IN TEACHING CONTEXT

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The alternative methods of assessment of students' language performance such as portfolios and conferences in university teaching context are being discussed and the recommendations how to improve students' performance assessment during their regular and extra-classes activities have been given.

Key words: *student, testing, assessment, teach, language, skills.*

Students' testing and assessment is a part of every teacher's job. Testing, assessment and evaluation add to the complexity of teaching but are necessary activities for students, faculty and program success. To implement this job there are both conventional and alternative assessments. To alternative types of assessment belong different kinds of work which require students to perform language skills with higher level of thinking. The major advantage of them is the fact that student demonstrate existing language competence. To keep the focus on learning we must carefully reconsider what we are measuring. It is important to teach and expect responsibility. But it is also crucial that we value and accurately measure academic achievements. So there exist several ways of measuring activities. Some of them are traditional, others are alternative. According to Brown (Brown & Abbeywickrama, 2010, p.41) alternative assessment includes: Portfolio, Conference, Self and Peer Assessment. During teaching process and studying different ways of improving checking procedure we have tried to implement two of them – portfolio and conference.

Portfolio, as a means of self-assessment was suggested by the European Union at the end of 20 century. But the idea of creation of Portfolio was not a new one. It is traditionally used in teaching a foreign language in the USA as well as in France. But there Portfolio is used as a tool of control and monitoring of individual performance of home assignment which after some due date's students hand in to their teacher for checking. According to Brown (Brown & Abbeywickrama, 2010, p. 61) portfolios are any procedures that require students to collect samples of their performances which are meaningful for them. We suggested that Portfolio be included as initial work at the beginning of University course. So far we have already used this kind of assessment among the first-year students of Physics department. At the beginning of the course they were offered so called Self Assessment Grids to fill in (Angelo T.A.& Cross K.P. 1993). Then they performed the same procedure at the end of the course. Thus it could be possible to establish which course objectives they had learnt and which they had not.

On the completion of investigation we have done the preliminary findings. First of all we would like to point out that the given method is not practical in our teaching context since it is time and efforts consuming in predesigning and grading due to the number of groups each teacher works with about 5-7 groups. In addition, this method of assessment requires a great number of copies.

But using this method, we can gain two main targets: to get reliable information about the language competence of our students and according to it to amend the syllabus.

Teachers can use Portfolio to plan instructions that is responsive to students' needs. They should follow certain recommendations:
– Plan regular meetings with students to review the contents of their portfolios.
– Review students' portfolios after major units.
– Look for recurrent and persistent difficulties experienced by students and make records of them.
– Listen carefully to students' comments about difficulties they are experiencing or the areas they feel are important to improve and build these into your lessons; otherwise students will not believe that their comments make a difference.

We should be aware that such routine though may be time consuming, but after certain practice it can be both beneficial and less time consuming.

Another method of assessment is conference. Our teacher experience has showed the fact that we are already conducting this method of assessment not knowing its name. Therefore we have studied some works of different authors (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996; Genessee & Upshur,1996; Brown,1998) to make sure that we are on the right way in assessing our students' performance. Conferences are defined as any assessment procedures that involve students visiting the teacher's office alone or in group for brief meeting. In such conferences the teacher can assess students' ability to perform particular language points and/or give students feedback on their work. Conference can be used widely as part of evaluation. They can include individual students, several students or the entire class; they can be conversations about completed work (as in the case of portfolio) or about work in progress (for example, during reading or writing activity) and they often focus on activity the teacher has set up to observe and discuss. At the outset we will want to introduce and explain the purpose of the conference to the students. The purposes may include discussions of students' views of the learning processes, bolstering their self-images, reviewing specific language skills and so on.

It is wise to negotiate the purposes of the conferences with the students so they have a sense of control over what will be covered or discussed and how the conference will proceed. In the process of conducting conferences we might want to consider attracting the students' attention on their views of the language learning processes they may never have thought prior about these processes. Hence conferences give the teacher a chance to encourage students to be aware of what it means to learn a long any foreign language and on the strategies that work best for them.

Conferences offer the teacher an opportunity to work with students on self- confidence issues when they are in the larger group of the class work. From a language learning point

of view conferences give the teacher an opportunity to work on specific language skills. We may want to try to observe which students are having trouble with which language skills in class, then, identify and work on those skills only with the students who need it. Or it may make more sense to check every one for the ability to perform certain skills during the conference and then work on it only for those students who require some improvement in that particular area (Brown, J (2005) p. 26) . As developing reading skills is particularly important in our context special attention is given to them. Science department students at the University have to read a great variety of texts including academic ones. Sometimes it is difficult for them to make a choice which text is appropriate to perform. So to show the best results students should know how to implement reading selection.

Conference about reading selection may include the following questions:
1. What did you practically like about the text?
2. How do you think the others would react to this text?
3. How was this the same or different from other things you have read and responded to?
4. How will this influence what you read in the future?

Though conference have been widely used for understanding students' reading and writing they can be also used in conjunction with oral language skills and with other areas of curriculum or program of study (such as Mathematics and Science). We focus on their use with language which is extremely important in our case. In comparison with Portfolios whose primary benefits are related to the assessment of achievements, conferences are advantageous for understanding the problems the students are experiencing during every day classes.

Though conferencing is time consuming routine it might be better to provide special conferences with individual student who is experiencing difficulty and require additional attention.

It is not recommended using conferences for grading purpose because grading generally focuses on learning outcomes or achievement, whereas the primary focus of conference is process. However, if conferences are to be used for grading, as it is in our case, when we are to provide conferences to assess students' skills in reading texts on science, the following guidelines are offered (used) and they are called guided self study class (СРСП) in our University.

To improve the routine of conferences and to make them relevant and reliable the following instructions are suggested:
1. The teacher should direct the conference and keep control of it at all times in order to ensure uniformity of the procedure.
2. All students should participate to ensure the collection of the same kind of information to be applied to grading all students. Rubrics (holistic or analytic) are required. The following holistic rubric has been designed for assessing students reading session:

A (5-10)	Students answer the questions well and show thorough context understanding;
B (6-9)	Students answer the questions and show context understanding;
C (3-6)	Students answer the questions and show limited context

	understanding
F (under 2)	Students do not answer the questions and show little context understanding.

For more accuracy of assessment analytic rubric can be used as well.

Content	A	B	C	F
Vocabulary	A number of appropriate terms, paraphrasing are used	Appropriate terms, paraphrasing are used	Limited number of terms, paraphrasing are used	Lack of terms and paraphrasing
Grammar	Show excellent use of grammar structures	Show use of grammar structures	Show limited use of grammar structures	Lack of use of grammar structure
Fluency	Show the ability to speak easily, smoothly and expressively	Show the ability to speak easily	Show the limited ability to speak easily	Do not show the ability to speak easily

3. The conference protocol should be the same for all students so that individual differences in student performance are not due to variations in protocol.

4. Use assessment information from conferences along with information collected from other assessment procedures such as testing.

5. It is essential to keep detailed notes of conferences if they are to be used for grading in case you are called on to back up your grade with reference to information collected during the conference.

Keep your notes about student's performance in a separate loose-leaf note-book or file folder with a section for each student. It is useful to make notes as soon as possible after reviewing portfolios and conference. Such notes should be dated and accompaniedby a brief description of the activity or work. The following kinds of questions can guide note-taking:

– What skill did the student demonstrate?
– Where did the student demonstrate growth or improvement?
– Does the student know his strength and weakness?
– Where did the student appear to have difficulties?

To record observationsduring conferences and about portfolios, checklists with predesigned categories can be applied if these activities are organized around instructional objectives and if they are conducted with all students at roughly the same stage of instructions. Checklist cannot be used if there is no predesigned focus for the conference. Checklists are useful only if you have a clear and precise knowledge of what you are to look

for or expect. They can be designed uniformly for all the teachers conducting lectures among students of the definite level. Along with creating syllabus it might be recommended to design checklists to record notes about conferences and portfolios. This has never been done before in our teaching practice but the reference study considers checklist designing as essential part of assessment process.

Teachers should involve students in this work as much as possible not only so that students can learn as much as possible from the process but also so the teacher's roles and work load are minimized. This recommendation is critical in our teaching context.

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КОМУНІКАТИВНА КОМПЕТЕНЦІЯ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ СТАНОВЛЕННЯ ПОЗИТИВНОГО ІМІДЖУ РЯТУВАЛЬНИКА

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The article analyzes the important factors of formation and development of professional communicative competence that promote a self-rescuer.
Key words: *communicative competence, rescue, image, selfrealization, language behavior.*

Увага багатьох сучасних учених прикута до того, який особливий набір інструментів має відношення до формування комунікативної компетенції й чи є він ефективним [3].

В інформаційному суспільстві фахівець повинен уміти швидко сприймати різну форму мовлення, необхідну інформацію, створювати монологи, вести діалоги, керувати системою мовних комунікацій у межах своєї професії.

Важливим фактором, який впливає на становлення й розвиток професійної комунікативної компетенції й сприяє самореалізації фахівця, є креативність особистості. Важко уявити сучасного рятувальника, який не вміє ухвалювати рішення швидко й на високому професійному рівні.

Креативні якості індивіда стійкі й забезпечують творчий стиль його мовної поведінки, продуктивність і унікальність способів і результатів діяльності, а також готовність до творчих конструктивних перетворень у різних сферах життєдіяльності. Такі особистості можуть ламати старі підходи, знаходити унікальні ідеї.