

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

Assessment of student achievement is one of the key components of teaching. Beside traditional forms of assessment, which are most common in teaching practice, recently alternative assessment is becoming more popular and frequent in educational discourse. The following article deals with the importance of assessment, traditional ways of assessment, alternative or authentic ways of assessment, and their features.

Key words: Traditional assessment, alternative assessment, authenticity, higher education, secondary education, evaluation.

Nowadays our government is paying a great attention on the development of foreign languages and has adopted many resolutions on this issue. As we know our president Sh. M. Mirziyoev sent his “Murojaatnoma”¹ to the OliyMajlis, as well as he met with gifted youth in the Forum, and set a lot of tasks for the improvement of foreign languages in our country.

Especially in “Murojaatnoma” that was held on 6 January, 2021 was noted by our president: “It would be an understatement to say that such a goal could not be achieved today without a thorough study of foreign languages. Following this strict requirement, I propose to make the study of physics and foreign languages a priority next year. To this end, in the coming year, systematic work will be carried out at all levels of education, such as radically improving the quality of teaching these subjects, opening specialized schools, attracting qualified teachers”.

To use assessment most effectively it should be an element that can motivate students to learn. Assessment tools should not only be used for assessment or evaluation of students’ achievement, but also for enhancing the quality of language learning and teaching. To enhance learning and teaching quality, assessment tools are expected to help encourage learners to learn actively and critically, not simply studying for an exam. Taking this issues into account, traditional types of assessment such as pencil-and-paper tests alone might not be able to stimulate students’ motivation to learn, or to truly assess their language ability during their learning process.²

Hence, alternative types of assessment come into play with the purpose of filling up a space where traditional types of assessment leave it empty. Alternative types of assessment such as journals, logs, portfolios, self-assessment, and peer-assessment help reveal what students can do with language. Most of them are considered performance-based types of assessment. The general features of alternative assessment include requiring students to perform, create, and produce something using real-world contexts or simulations, focusing on processes as well as products, and providing information about both the strengths and the weaknesses of students. It is important that teachers make appropriate choices among the various assessment options in order to facilitate students’ learning and to make an accurate judgment on the extent to which students have achieved their learning objectives.

But there are some features that can be used to identify and use traditional assessment

¹Lex.uz

²Marissa Phongsirikul. Ways of assessment. -Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand. EFLections Vol 25, №1, 2018. -P.94

tools. First, a traditional assessment tool is likely to be considered a standardized test with decontextualized test items. Second, the focus is on discrete answers. Third, it tends to be a summative test which is oriented towards the product. Finally, it evaluates non-interactive performance, so it fosters extrinsic motivation. Examples of traditional assessment types are true-false, matching, and multiple-choice formats. Versus to this alternative assessment can be continuous long-term assessment with contextualized communicative tasks. In addition, it encourages open-ended, creative answers. It is considered a formative assessment which is oriented towards the process. Finally, it involves inter-active performance, so it fosters intrinsic motivation. Alternative types of assessment can present new ways of motivating and inspiring students to learn as well as evaluating students' language ability on a basis of authenticity in their use of language. The concept of authenticity encourages students to carry out tasks based on what they have actually encountered in their daily lives and that is one reason why alternative assessment produces meaningful classroom activities. Teachers have been trying to find better ways to assess their students' language ability with a belief that traditional assessment alone cannot fully assess what should be assessed. Alternative types of assessment are therefore more widely implemented in English language teaching and learning to serve this purpose. This also facilitates the making of informed and appropriate decisions on the student. It should be added that, the rubric for scoring traditional assessment procedure, for example, multiple choice is not too difficult to be prepared and that facilitates scoring. Alternative assessment procedures on the other requires effective, efficient and well defined criteria or rubric for scoring and standards to achieve reliability and validity of results. This is because, students can be given the same task, but since students demonstrate their knowledge by doing, there will be differences in the way students may go about the doing. In situations where there are not a well-defined criteria or rubric for scoring, standards to achieve validity and reliability may be lowered. Additionally, traditional assessment procedures provide indirect evidence of learning. This is because the assessor may not be present to know the skill and ability adopted by the student in the quest of knowing. This assessment procedure therefore provides a limited ways for the students to demonstrate what they have learned. But we can say that alternative assessment provide a direct evidence of learning or competency. This type of assessment procedure brings to light a direct demonstration and application of knowledge and skills by performing or doing relevant task.

Advantages of traditional assessment

- Traditional assessment evaluates the learning and retaining capacity of a child. It analyses how much of the provided material or syllabus has been acquired by the student. It also helps educators or teachers to compare the performances of different students.
- The teacher gets a preview of a student's knowledge conveniently.
- It assesses a student's learning through a set of questions accurate as per the specified syllabus. Exams and tests conducted are pen and paper-based. The answers to every question pertain to a particular subject and do not fluctuate as per the opinions of the people; hence the evaluation by the teachers is also elementary and straight forward.
- Students develop their retaining and understanding capabilities. They also learn to recognize and reconstruct their intellect and build their cognitive abilities.
- This approach is overall more simple, straightforward and time-saving. The teachers are efficiently able to manage more children in a lesser amount of time, and it is quiet, reliable and fixed.
- Traditional assessments do not require extra tools and hence is very economical. A simple pen and paper can be used in the procedure.

Disadvantages of traditional assessment

- It limits a student's potential and does allow out of the box thinking. Hence, this method cannot be deemed to be a very creative one.
- It just provides a surface preview of a student's capabilities as per the norms set by the regular curriculum. Not every individual may be suited to a particular format, and traditional assessments are very restrictive.
- Students get limited options.
- Students do not develop extensive comprehensive skills.
- It is a more theory-based approach which may sometimes not promote a healthy learning and inclusive atmosphere. Students feel pressured, and competence can cause anxiety. This method is not very diversified, and hence it fails in catering to the unique needs of every individual.

Advantages of alternative assessment

- Alternative Assessment aids in measuring the proficiency of the student based on their analytical, reasoning and logical thinking skills. By application of their theoretical knowledge, students gain better experience and also learn to tackle the problems.
- It helps in recognizing a student's unique set of abilities. A teacher can understand better as to which field a student is more drawn to and where his/ her success rate is more.

- It evaluates a student's problem-solving skills and helps in real-life application of the knowledge.
- It helps in student's engagement and provides them with opportunities to construct a new meaning of the things that are being taught.
- Provides the students with a vast set of resources to learn. Assessment drives the curriculum in this scenario.
- It gives the teachers an in-depth analysis of a student's capabilities and gives more information about their weaknesses and strengths.
- Students have the liberty to work as per their capabilities and do not feel contained or pressured to perform as per the specified mark, and the comparison also becomes more suitable.

Disadvantages of alternative assessment

- The process becomes rigorous for the teachers as it is harder to evaluate. Teachers have to put in more efforts in understanding a student's work.
- More efforts demand more time. Hence this method is highly time-consuming.
- Sometimes it may lead to misunderstanding and unfairness.
- It is far less economical, as practical applications and project work demand a lot of resources and investments.

Brown & Hudson summarize twelve characteristics of alternative assessments as follows:

1. Require students to perform, create, produce, or do something;
2. Use real-world contexts or stimulations;
3. Are nonintrusive in that they extend the day-to-day classroom activities;
4. Allow students to be assessed on what they normally do in class every day;
5. Use tasks that represent meaningful instructional activities;
6. Focus on processes as well as products;
7. Tap into higher level thinking and problem-solving skills.
8. Provide information about both the strengths and weaknesses of students.³

We want to say that, even though alternative assessment has a lot of benefits and privileges than traditional way of assessment, in final examinations in most higher education still have

³ Brown and Hudson. Alternatives in assessment. -EF Lectures Vol. 25, №1, January – June, 2018. -P.654-655

been used traditional ways of assessment, as it requires less time and effort to check and assess.

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