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ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT METHODS IN EVALUATION FUTURE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS' LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS

***Анотація.** Проаналізовано застосування сучасних методів альтернативного оцінювання в системі контролю навчальних досягнень студентів мовних спеціальностей вищих педагогічних навчальних закладів. Наведено приклади найбільш вживаних форм альтернативного оцінювання, визначено їх переваги та недоліки.*

***Ключові слова:** оцінювання; альтернативне оцінювання; автентичне оцінювання; портфоліо; оцінювальна рубрика; контрольна картка; студент; навчальні досягнення; іноземна мова.*

Introduction. Modern changes in the system of higher education in Ukraine, participation in the Bologna Process, transfer to two-cycle system of professional training lead to the necessity of upgrading not only curricular and syllabus contents, but also to the implementation of absolutely new qualitative approaches to the realization of professional education. Speaking about high quality of education, one cannot help mentioning the problem of a modern reliable system of assessment which corresponds to the international standards.

The quality of education and assessment techniques has been analyzed by numerous researchers (S. Arkhanhelskyi, Iu. Babanskyi, B. Bolotov, D. Horbatov, H. Hutnyk, L. Davydova, L. Denysova, L. Kamenska, V. Kachalov, M. Korolov, R. Milrud, A. Nesterov, S. Pavlova, V. Pashkov, N. Selieznova, T. Stepanova, T. Shabanov, Ie. Yakovliev, L. Bachman, P. Benson, R.C. Gardner, J. Lantolf, D. Lemov etc.) There are quite a lot of works devoted to the control of students' learning-cognitive activities in the sphere of foreign language methodology (I. Bim, N. Halskova, N. Hez, Y. Zymnia, H. Kytaihorodska, A. Lieontiev, R. Myniar-Bieloruchev, A. Myroliubov, Ie. Passov, V. Skalkin, A. Starkov, S. Shatilov, D. Little, M. A. O'Malley, J. Norris, S. McDonough etc.). However, in the modern educational paradigm anthropocentric approach to communication is focused on the understanding of language and thinking interrelation which places a learner in the center of educational process. In case of foreign language teaching a student is undoubtedly an active participant of this process analysis. So, rising demands to the quality of specialists training cause the necessity to search for innovative teaching methods and technologies as well as appropriate forms of knowledge and skills assessment.

The aim of the research. The aim of the article is to analyze different formats of alternative assessments used in foreign language teaching. The aim of the research presupposes the following tasks: 1) to prove the advantages of alternative assessment; 2) to give a brief description of various methods of alternative assessment.

Presenting the main material. Nowadays most teachers realize that standard assessment methods of students' learning achievements, the most wide-spread of which is testing, do not allow to form in full all the necessary skills that enable students to successfully realize their life and professional goals after graduating from a higher educational establishment. The mostly often used standardized tests are not capable to assess students' abilities to perform tasks in real-life situations. Wide usage of tests limits the development of the most important behavioral skills and key competencies which are required in modern professional environment and everyday life. What is more, such tests are hardly ever aimed at revealing of students' individual opportunities and inclinations.

Thus, the idea of alternative assessment of students' achievements is gaining popularity nowadays. Teachers use the term «alternative assessment» to characterize alternatives to traditional, standardized, based on norms and criteria testing or assessment.

Alternative assessment (formative assessment) is a continuous process which unites teaching, learning and evaluation. The main aim of this approach is to stimulate learners' effective development and educational progress, to ensure feedback during these processes. In other words, the «mark» problem in the sphere of future foreign language teachers training acquires a new shade as students have to master the language not only as a means of communication but also as the means of professional activity [1].

Alternative assessment uses activities that reveal what students can do with language, emphasizing their strengths instead of their weaknesses. Alternative assessment instruments are not only designed and structured differently from traditional tests, but are also graded or scored differently. Because alternative assessment is performance based, it helps instructors emphasize that the point of language learning is communication for meaningful purposes. Rather than counting the number of right and wrong responses, these assessments give a holistic picture of a student's abilities and highlight where further improvement is needed. They give the student a chance to demonstrate the depth and scope of learning without being limited to narrow questions or make-or-break tests. Often, alternative assessments are utilized for students with learning disabilities who have difficulties performing on standardized tests [2].

The following criteria define authentic assessment activities:

- they are built around topics or issues of interest to the students;
- they replicate real-world communication contexts and situations;
- they involve multi-stage tasks and real problems that require creative use of language rather than simple repetition;
- they require learners to produce a quality product or performance;
- their evaluation criteria and standards are known to the student;
- they involve interaction between assessor (instructor, peers, self) and person assessed;
- they allow for self-evaluation and self-correction as they proceed [3].

Alternative assessment methods are used to evaluate the following skills: to single out the main points; to ask appropriate questions; to analyze and compare information; to distinguish facts from subjective opinion, true statements from false ones; to find out cause-and-effect relations; to make conclusions; to find solutions and foresee their consequences; to express logically relevant opinions; to check the obtained results on practice [4, p.45].

The fundamental principles of alternative control in the area of foreign languages teaching lie in the creation of the most favorable conditions to students' self-actualization and formation of appropriate self-evaluation and positive prospects in the educational process. The researcher O. Pometun [5] suggests the following methods (formats) of alternative assessment: express questioning, extended questioning (a full answer with clarification of statements and proofs presenting), a creative task, observation with the usage of assessment rubrics, self- or peer-evaluation. Foreign teachers also include authentic assessment, portfolio, essays, participation in speaking clubs and role plays, discussions etc.

Authentic assessment aims to evaluate students' abilities in real-world contexts. In other words, students learn how to apply their skills to authentic tasks and projects. Authentic assessment does not encourage rote learning and passive test-taking. Instead, it focuses on students' analytical skills; ability to integrate what they learn; creativity; ability to work collaboratively; and written and oral expression skills. It values the learning process as much as the end product [6]. Applying authentic assessment the teacher pays special attention namely to the indexes of students' individual development rather than to comparison of different students' achievements. In foreign language teaching practice we can use the following formats of authentic assessment: research projects; scientific presentations;

thematic discussions; writing compositions, essays, research articles, abstracts, reports, commentaries or reviews; reading and interpreting literature.

Assessment rubric is another form of alternative assessment. Rubrics are primarily used for language tasks that involve some kind of oral or written production on the part of the student. They can be used to assess compositions, group work, projects, oral presentations, as the process of assessment is quite transparent. It is possible to create a generic rubric that can be used with multiple speaking or writing tasks, but assessment is more accurate when the instructor uses rubrics that are fitted to the task and the goals of instruction [7]. There are four main types of rubrics.

1. *Holistic rubrics*. Holistic scales or rubrics respond to language performance as a whole. Each score on a holistic scale represents an overall impression; one integrated score is assigned to a performance. The emphasis in holistic scoring is on what a student does well. Holistic rubrics commonly have four or six points. Holistic scoring is primarily used for large-scale assessment when a relatively quick yet consistent approach to scoring is necessary. It is less useful for classroom purposes because it provides little information to students about their performance [3].

2. *Analytic rubrics*. Analytic scales are divided into separate categories representing different aspects or dimensions of performance. For example, dimensions for writing performance might include content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Each dimension is scored separately, then dimension scores are added to determine an overall score [3]. Analytic rubrics have two advantages:

- The instructor can give different weights to different dimensions. This allows the instructor to give more credit for dimensions that are more important to the overall success of the communication task. For example, in a writing rubric, the dimension of content might have a total point range of 30, whereas the range for mechanics might be only 10.
- They provide more information to students about the strengths and weaknesses of various aspects of their language performance.

However, analytic scoring has also been criticized because the parts do not necessarily add up to the whole. Providing separate scores for different dimensions of a student's writing or speaking performance does not give the teacher or the student a good assessment of the whole of a performance.

3. *Primary trait rubrics*. In primary trait scoring, the instructor predetermines the main criterion or primary trait for successful performance of a task. This approach thus involves narrowing the criteria for judging performance to one main dimension. For example, consider a task that requires a student to write a persuasive letter to an editor of the university newspaper. This kind of rubric has the advantage of allowing teachers and students to focus on one aspect or dimension of language performance. It is also a relatively quick and easy way to score writing or speaking performance, especially when a teacher wants to emphasize one specific aspect of that performance [3].

4. *Multitrait rubrics*. The multitrait approach is similar to the primary trait approach but allows for rating performance on three or four dimensions rather than just one. Multitrait rubrics resemble analytic rubrics in that several aspects are scored individually. However, where an analytic scale includes traditional dimensions such as content, organization, and grammar, a multitrait rubric involves dimensions that are more closely aligned with features of the task. For example, on an information-gap speaking task where students are asked to describe a picture in enough detail for a listener to choose it from a set of similar pictures, a multitrait rubric would include dimensions such as quality of description, fluency, and language control [8].

Rubrics perform the function of feedback to teachers, with their help it is possible to establish certain standards and set up claims. Self-evaluation rubrics help students to learn on

their mistakes, to distinguish the most important points in a particular topic, to find out what they have mastered and what requires further practice. While creating a rubric teachers should clearly define qualities or criteria to be assessed in different speech activities or exercises. To create a rubric we need special descriptors which consist of two parts: criterion description and performance level description. Then there should be the highest and the lowest level descriptors. They indicate the quality of work and how many points are awarded to students depending on the level of their performance. The description of every criterion defines unbiased evaluation of the work quality rather than a subjective opinion as for this work. For example, it is better to use the phrase «utterances are grammatically and lexically accurate» rather than «utterances are correct». Rubrics should include all the criteria which are awarded with points.

Performance-based assessments include interviews, oral reports, role plays, describing, explaining, summarizing, retelling, paraphrasing stories or text material, and so on. Oral assessments should be conducted on an ongoing basis to monitor comprehension and thinking skills. Students may choose one or two pictures they would like to talk about and the teacher leads them by asking questions, especially ones that elicit the use of academic language (comparing, explaining, describing, analyzing, hypothesizing, etc.) and vocabulary pertinent to the topic.

Role plays enjoy great popularity among students of all ages. For example, a teacher can take on the role of a character who knows less than the students about a particular subject area. Students are motivated to convey facts or information prompted by questions from the character. Role plays can serve as an alternative to traditional book reports. Students can transform themselves into a character or object from the book. For example, a student might become Christopher Columbus, one of his sailors, or a mouse on the ship, and tell the story from that character's point of view. The other students can write interview questions to pose to the various characters [1].

Some of the oral and written products useful for assessing students' progress are content area thinking and learning logs, reading response logs, writing assignments (both structured and creative), dialogue journals, videos. «Content area logs» are designed to encourage the use of metacognitive strategies when students read expository text. Entries can be made on a form with these two headings: What I Understood/What I Didn't Understand (ideas or vocabulary).

«Reading response logs» are used for students' written responses or reactions to a piece of literature. Students may respond to questions, generic or specific to the literature, that encourage critical thinking, or they may copy a brief text on one side of the page and write their reflections on the text on the other side [9].

«Dialogue journals» provide a means of interactive, ongoing correspondence between students and teachers. Students determine the choice of topics and participate at their level of English language proficiency. Beginners can draw pictures that can be labeled by the teacher [1].

One more format of alternative assessment is a portfolio. Portfolios exhibit the progression of a student's learning over time. A teacher may create a portfolio compiling student essays or other assignments to demonstrate learning that a standardized test may not. Portfolios are typically attached to specific learning objectives and include a reflective piece by the student. Web 2.0 capabilities have allowed students to create and post portfolios online to share with other students and their teachers [10]. There are a lot of portfolio types, but three main ones are documents portfolio, works portfolio and references portfolio.

Documents portfolio includes a set of official individual educational results (diplomas, certificates, letters of commendation etc.). This model allows to evaluate portfolio materials from qualitative and quantitative points of view. The drawback of this type is the fact that it records just the results rather than the process of individual development.

Works portfolio is a collection of project, creative, research works, description of forms and areas of educational and creative activities. This portfolio type allows qualitative evaluation, for example, according to number, variety and cogency of materials, their quality etc. It shows the dynamics of individual educational and creative activities.

References portfolio consists of references given by teachers, parents, educators in general. It may also include reviews, resumes, commentaries, summaries of students' creative, scientific, research works, record their participation in conferences, seminars or webinars. This kind of portfolio involves self-evaluation and self-actualization [11, p.124–145].

Another popular type of alternative assessment is peer-assessment with checklists. Checklists can be used to assess lexical or grammar skills on different levels. Students are asked to create their own tasks according to the given pattern. For example, to check grammar skills students can compile exercises on differentiation, substitution or transformation. Students work in pairs and each one is given a particular period of time (10-15 minutes) to prepare and present the tasks to the partner. Along with pattern list each learner receives lists with assessment criteria Observation Checklist, Persistence Checklist, Work Habits Checklist. Observation Checklist enables peer-assessment on the basis of simple observation of activities without their deep analysis. Persistence Checklist allows the observant to evaluate how the exercise is done (persistence, search for several ways of performance, usage of different approaches etc). Work Habits Checklist lets the observant evaluate how thoroughly the work is done, effectiveness of time management, acceptance of advice and guidelines etc [12]. This list bears a more general character and is designed for a longer period. It can be used over the whole period of course studying.

As any other assessment formats alternative assessment techniques have their own advantages and disadvantages. Among the pluses of alternative assessments we can mention the following ones: they provide a means of assessing valued skills that cannot be directly assessed with traditional tests; they provide a more realistic setting for student performance than traditional tests; they focus on student performance and the quality of work performed by students; they can be easily aligned with established learning outcomes [13].

However, alternative assessment can be costly in terms of time, effort, equipment, materials, facilities, or funds. What is more, rating process is sometimes more subjective than traditional exams.

Conclusion. To draw a conclusion, we may state that alternative assessment methods are worth including in the control system of students' learning achievements as they contribute to the creation of such educational process that promotes formation and development of cognitive and individual qualities or competencies which are necessary to everyone to take an active part in the life of modern informational society.

Further investigations are necessary to develop the calculation methodology of learning achievements, to create appropriate guidelines for constructing alternative assessment tasks according to the level of students' progress and their individual needs.

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Abstract. Panchenko V. V. Alternative assessment methods in evaluation of future foreign language teachers' learning achievements.

Introduction. Major changes happening in the national system of foreign languages teaching in the context of the Bologna Process lead to the appearance of new strategies, updating of the educational contents, methods and techniques. Nowadays most educators realize that standard assessment approaches do not correspond to the evaluation goals of all the skills which are significant in modern professional life. Therefore, their attention shifts to alternative assessment techniques.

Purpose. The aim of the article is to analyze different formats of alternative assessments used in foreign language teaching.

Results. Alternative assessments are an important means of gaining a dynamic picture of students' academic and linguistic development. Alternative assessment refers to procedures and techniques which can be used within the context of instruction and can be easily incorporated into the daily activities of the group. It is particularly useful with English as a second language students because it employs strategies that ask students to show what they can do. In contrast to traditional testing, students are evaluated on what they integrate and produce rather than on what they are able to recall and reproduce. Although there is no single definition of alternative assessment, the main goal is to gather evidence about how students are approaching, processing, and completing real-life tasks in a particular domain. Alternative assessment includes a variety of methods that can be adapted for different situations. Among the most popular formats are authentic assessment, assessment rubrics (holistic, analytic, primary trait, multitrait), role plays, reading response logs, dialogue journals, portfolio, checklists. The main advantage of alternative assessments methods is their ability to assess students' proficiency in performing complex tasks that are directly associated with learning outcomes.

Originality. The most popular alternative assessment methods are thoroughly analyzed, the significance of their usage in the professional training of future foreign language teachers is stressed.

Conclusion. Combined with traditional forms of assessment, alternative assessment gives a more comprehensive and complete look at a student's progress. Although the challenge to modify existing methods of assessment and to develop new approaches is not an easy one, the benefits for both teachers and students are great. The ideas and models presented here are intended to be adaptable, practical, and realistic for teachers who are dedicated to creating meaningful and effective assessment experiences for English as a second language.

Key words: assessment; alternative assessment; authentic assessment; portfolio; assessment rubric; checklist; student; learning achievements; foreign language.

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