ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Barantsova Irina
PhD, associate professor
Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol
State Pedagogical University

Tkach Marina
senior teacher,
Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol
State Pedagogical University

Obviously, traditional assessment techniques are often incongruent with current ESL classroom practices. Because of the incompatibility of process learning and product assessment and the discrepancy between the information needed and the information derived through standardized testing, educators have begun to explore alternative forms of student assessment. "Assessment standards are criteria that collaboratively describe what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate… They embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve the learning outcomes.

Assessment standards within each learning outcome collectively show how conceptual progression occurs... Teachers will teach and assess the learners' achievement of the assessment standards and therefore measure the learners' achievement of the learning outcome " [3, p.19].

One of the popular and effective types of alternative assessment is portfolio. A portfolio is a systematic collection of student work that represents student activities, accomplishments, and achievements over a specific period in one or more areas of the curriculum. There are two main types of portfolios:

- Showcase Portfolios: students select and submit their best work. The showcase portfolio emphasizes the products of learning.

- Developmental Portfolios: students select and submit pieces of work that can show evidence of growth or change over time. The growth portfolio emphasizes the process of learning.

The purpose of portfolio is to:

• give students the opportunity to track their growth over a period of time;

• use as a basis for assigning grades (based on effort);

• as placement / entrance requirements;

• develop students' ability to critique their own progress [2, pp.576 - 598].

The following types of materials can be included in a portfolio: audio - and videotaped recordings of readings or oral presentations; writing samples such as

dialogue journal entries, book reports, writing assignments (drafts or final copies), reading log entries, or other writing projects; art work such as pictures or drawings, and graphs and charts; conference or interview notes and anecdotal records. Portfolio development is increasingly cited as a viable alternative to standardized testing (Flood & Lapp; Hiebert & Calfee; Jongsma; Katz; Rothman; Shepard; Valencia; Wiggins; Wolf).

In this article we define portfolio assessment and describe characteristics of an exemplary portfolio procedure, and describe a model that can be used in planning language - related portfolio assessment. The concept of portfolio development was adopted from the field of fine arts where portfolios are used to display illustrative samples of an artist's work. The purpose of the artist's portfolio is to demonstrate the depth and breadth of the work as well as the artist's interests and abilities.

Many educators perceive the intent of educational portfolios to be similar to that of portfolios used in fine arts, to demonstrate the depth and breadth of students' capabilities through biographies of students' work; descriptions of students' reading and writing experiences; literacy folders; collections of pieces of writing (Katz, 1988); comparison reports; and student work exhibitions [1; 4].

Developmental Portfolio (or working portfolios) includes samples of independent work (initial work compared to more current work), evaluations by teacher, peers, reflections on the growth over a period of time (e.g., "I used to be unsure about punctuation, e.g., where does the comma really go?, but now, I feel comfortable in making decisions about punctuation, and I am right most of the time!"), may be used for instructional purposes and may include various stages of products, various drafts, etc. Finished portfolio includes samples of best independent work, evaluations by teacher, peers, self, samples organized according to some system (e.g., creative writing, scientific writing), usually used to provide a summative evaluation and is standard format [5]. A portfolio used for educational assessment must offer more than a showcase for student products; it must be the product of a complete assessment procedure that has been systematically planned, implemented, and evaluated.

The Portfolio Assessment Model described in this document distinguishes clearly between portfolios and portfolio assessment. A portfolio is a collection of a student's work, experiences, exhibitions, self - ratings (i.e., data), whereas portfolio assessment is the procedure used to plan, collect, and analyze the multiple sources of data maintained in the portfolio. A portfolio that is based on a systematic assessment procedure can provide accurate information about the depth and breadth of a student's capabilities in many aspects of learning [7]. If portfolio is used for assessment purposes, it is characterized by focus on evaluation of student work in its entirety and certifying accomplishment, clear guidelines about content of portfolio and scoring criteria, highly standardized content and organization of portfolios.

The framework for portfolio assessment consists of seven steps: (1) planning the assessment purpose, (2) determining portfolio outcomes, (3) matching classroom tasks to outcomes, (4) establishing criteria for assessment, (5) determining organization, (6) monitoring the portfolio, and (7) evaluating the portfolio process. The framework offers teachers a fair and reliable assessment model that creates an interactive

assessment. This assessment method involves different stakeholders and creates a partnership in the learning process [6].

The proposed Portfolio Assessment Model for ESL includes six interrelated levels of assessment activities: (a) identifying the purpose and focus of the portfolio procedure (establish a portfolio committee and a focus for the portfolio); (b) planning portfolio contents (select assessment procedures, specify portfolio contents, and determine the frequency of assessment); (c) designing portfolio analysis (set standards and criteria for interpretation of portfolio contents, determine the procedure for integrating portfolio information and schedule staff responsibilities for portfolio analysis); (d) preparing for instructional use (plan instructional use and feedback to students and parents); (e) identifying procedures to verify the accuracy of the information (i.e., establish a system to check the reliability of portfolio information and to validate instructional decisions); (f) implementing the model.

This model can be applied to any educational setting. While designing assessment portfolio specific features and requirements of the syllabus and curriculum should be taken into consideration.

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