ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING: DEFINITION, PURPOSE, DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

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In this article, an emphasis has been put on defining formative assessment and elaborate readers' understanding of the term. The author highlights the central role of formative assessment to motivate language learners in the teaching and learning process. There is a comparison of formative and summative assessment with a clear example of personal experience. The writer explains how teachers in two distinct cultures approaches to student learning. formative assessment, test, summative assessment, motivate.

Introduction. In recent years, a great emphasis on language assessment has been the main focus of language teachers. Reasonably, it has been a primary issue for decades since its role in the teaching and learning process is central. When assessment is not properly utilized, this can lead to several issues like poor student participation, reduction in student overall performance. There is a strong relationship between assessment and teaching because each depends on another. Teachers' lack of assessment skills may cause little or no connection between assessment and teaching (Malone, 2011). We believe that language teachers need to take assessment training or participate in language assessment conferences so that they understand how teaching and learning can be made easier with the help of assessment.

Formative assessment is an ongoing data gathering process in which information will be predominantly used by teachers to make decisions on students' performance. It is usually associated with diagnostic assessment in which teachers learn about language

learners' weaknesses and strengths. The term *formative assessment* in Uzbek can be translated as *doimiy baholash* or *joriy nazorat***.**

Personal experience. During doimiy baholash, we mean students are assessed for learning where marking is not primary focus though students are given relatively one tenth of total point for their work. For example, K.Akhmadjonov (2017) taught a problem-solution essay in the classroom and assigned students to do writing tasks at home. The following tasks were accomplished in the classroom and beyond it: First students were taught to structure essay, introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion. Many practical exercises were accomplished to understand aspects (thesis statement, topic sentences, supporting sentences, etc.) of essay. Then, students applied the knowledge to construct their own essay at home. The next lesson, students brought essays to classroom to do peer editing. All students were involved in peer editing activity. To do this, they were provided with an analytic rubric (see Table 1.) which contained assessment criteria that aligned with lesson objectives. The rubric helped students understand their weaknesses and strengths and they could also give constructive feedback to their peers in order to improve their writing. The teacher assessed students formatively for all they had done in the classroom and at home and for this, they were marked with a minimum grade compared to summative grade which accounts for maximum grading.

Comparison of formative and summative assessment. In comparison with summative assessment, formative assessment is considered a low-stake measurement of student achievement because students are more encouraged to learn and be active throughout the teaching and learning process. Summative assessment, on the other hand, is high stake test as the results taken will be necessary for different stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, parents and government. Administrators need results from final examinations in order to evaluate teaching process, students' achievements and they compare statistics with previous years. Parents are eager to know about their children's achievements and progress as well. Interestingly, students also need results to understand their weaknesses so that they can work more on themselves. Mostly importantly, government usually compare students among schools, universities and in this way, they can make further decision on teaching, teachers, curriculum and policy.

Table   *1*

Summary writing Sample Rubric (Akhmadjonov&Akmalova, 2020)

Content	Picks out the main points, does not miss key points, does not give every detail	Provides main points with few unnecessary, unimportant details	Mentions only few main points; mostly misses key points; provides detailed information	Does not mention any main points, does not describe what the text is about
Paraphrase	Uses their own words to express the ideas, uses synonyms, different sentence structure	Uses own words, synonyms, different sentences structures but with some inaccuracies	Does not use own words, copies similar sentence structures, or similar words, there is limited amount of own words	Does not attempt to use own words; uses the same words, structures from the original text
Length	A shorter version (one third) of the original text	A bit longer than one third of the original text	It is two thirds of the original text, longer than shorter	Does not attempt to write or the length is almost in the amount with the original text
Organization	Clear structure (introduction, main points and conclusion)	Partly follows the order, confuses parts of the summary	Does not attempt to organize ideas in order, does not finish with conclusion	Does not seem to follow any order; not a summary at all

Assessment and teaching depend on each other as they both are directed to lead language learners to progress and achieve expected outcomes. Teachers can ask some questions to themselves to clarify whether they are in the right path.

• How are we going to achieve our goals?

• Are our assessments properly constructed?

• How do we intend to learn about students' needs?

• What assessments are students expecting from course objectives?

• Do assessments align with curriculum and learning objectives? (Frank, 2012).

These questions ought to be answered at the beginning of a course design as it will help instructors foresee assessment issues in their classroom. **Testing.** Traditionally, testing or a test was considered the only assessment tool and in some teaching contexts, unfortunately, it is the only assessment tool. Many test developers struggle to construct reliable and valid tests. Tests used to function as

information tools that teachers used to learn about students' achievements, weaknesses and strengths. However, later emphasis moved from testing to alternative assessment tools such as student portfolios, web-based testing (Frank, 2012), checklist, rubrics and others. Proper selection of assessment tools will definitely assist teachers to match students needs and learning strategies. In fact, students vary from being extrovert, introvert to auditory, visual, kinesthetic learners. For auditory learners, for instance, it may work listening tests, visual learners may find tests with some pictures. Fengying (2003) points out that among other factors, modification of assessment methods will motivate students. **Formative assessment practices with teachers' approach in language classroom in two countries**

China	Uzbekistan
Very demanding language teachers. They do not praise their achievements instead they don't give up until their students achieve the expected outcomes	Generally, depends on teachers, some demand, others not. it is typical to praise their achievements when their students win and they can be awarded with some financial benefits.
A responsible teacher who stays till night and corrects errors students have. When students' work is covered with much red, then they are satisfied with their work	Very uncommon to see teachers late in the evening working with students and correcting errors. They usually stand till the end of the lesson, they hurry up to another work.
Students' outcomes are compared when announced. Students who did not receive higher results, are asked to work harder.	Students usually compare their marks with their peers. Students are encouraged to work harder but it is not typical to motivate them to do so

It is clear that there is a distinct understanding between two cultures in teachers' approach to student learning, achievement and motivation (see Table 2.). Chinese teachers tend to be more serious, demanding and achievements focused (Fengying, 2003), while Uzbek teachers would love to finish eighty minutes lesson and get on to other tasks, less motivated, and more focus on personal interests rather on students' accomplishments. But not all teachers tend to possess the

same features, self-sacrificing, student centered and student loving Uzbek teachers are manifold as well.

Conclusion. To sum it up, assessment matters much in teaching and learning environment, since their alignment bring outcomes. The other way around, may result in issues such as student demotivation, inappropriate assessment strategies, and overall poor student performance. Formative assessment will definitely help teachers to establish their teaching environment in the way they wish to have and students will benefit from learning and being in the classroom. Thus, teachers should try to learn assessment skills, apply their knowledge in selecting best alternative assessment tools and this is likely to lead to perfections in teaching and learning.

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