

Učilište Jantar - ustanova za obrazovanje odraslih



Erasmus+

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Ante Demo, prof.

Assessment

Being an English teacher does not only involve grammar, vocabulary and communication with students. Assessing your students is something that tends to be taken lightly but in fact, is far more complex than some might think. There are numerous elements that need to be taken into account. I have always looked for reassurance and guidance regarding my assessment methods and that is precisely why I decided to attend NILE in Norwich and the TEA course held there. The main objectives: designing items and tests, assessing, marking and conferring with other colleagues. Certainly something that any teacher would need to refer to.

Assessing should always involve the following essential principles:

Validity - tests should cover the language and grammar covered in the coursebook and should be authentic- using real-life English

Reliability – the items and tasks selected should be fair and consistent

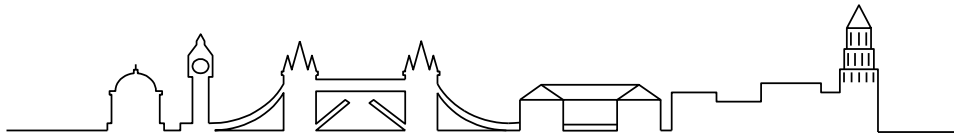
Impact – The tests should have positive effects on teaching and learning in and outside the classroom which is known as “washback”

Practicality – tests should be user-friendly, practical for teachers and students

Following these principles is crucial when assessing and marking. All teachers should award points for each item or task according to their objectives. Having that in mind, consistency in marking is of great importance and any greater divergence is a signal that the assessment process is not being conducted correctly.

Having the correct assessment scales is significant in order to be consistent with marking. The assessor needs to follow them strictly as this can aid in ensuring consistency. The assessment scales should be clear and in accordance with the descriptors when marking speaking, writing, grammar and vocabulary. They should also be aligned with the CEFR.

If assessors are able to implement this process then they should strive to do the same within the organisation or department they teach in. All colleagues should be coordinated, using



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the same criteria which will finally lead to greater consistency and thus eliminate divergence issues.

This is particularly important with young learners, as they may require support but should not be penalised for this in the marking process. Some neglect the fact that young learners need occasional support and consequently may be too harsh on them when marking. The assessor needs to adapt to the level being assessed accordingly without reluctance in using the scales and descriptors.

We also need to have in mind that our objectives need to be clear as they may change according to the test being assessed (aptitude test, diagnostic test, proficiency test, achievement test, placement test). Each test has different elements being tested and this needs to be clear from the start.

The course highlighted the principles listed above as key features when designing tests and thus ensuring fairness and consistency in marking. The assessment scales being used need to be in accordance with the particular CEFR level. Assessors that work within the same department and organisation should work on having the same criteria and eliminate divergence issues. The scales being used need to have very precise descriptors for the different categories and tests being assessed. Following these principles can definitely help us be better assessors and will ultimately help our students in the process.