

National Virtual Colloquium

Sharing good practices and lessons learned for resilient and sustainable professional development

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Title: Assessment, testing and evaluation: basic concepts in proficiency language assessment in Higher Education in Cuba

Course of Reference: Fundamentals of Language Assessment

Training Institution: “Universidad de Ciencias Informáticas” (UCI) and the British Council

Trainers: Ana M. Reyes Suárez , Dania C. Fariñas Hdez

Beneficiaries: 20 professors benefited from the University of Artemisa

Ways used for cascading: Workshops

Type of cascading activities: Methodological workshops



Main concepts or ideas treated in the workshops

Objective: to demonstrate knowledge and skills in the application, in a creative way, of concepts, principles and basic classifications of language proficiency in Higher Education in Cuba.

Time of duration: 10 hours (4 h. face to face, 4 h. group work, 2h. evaluation)

1st part: (2 h. face to face, 2 h. group work, 1 h. evaluation)

Main concepts

Basic principles in testing and assessment

Internal and external assessment/evaluation

2nd part: (2 h. face to face, 2 h. group work, 1 h. evaluation)

Large-scale and classroom-based assessment

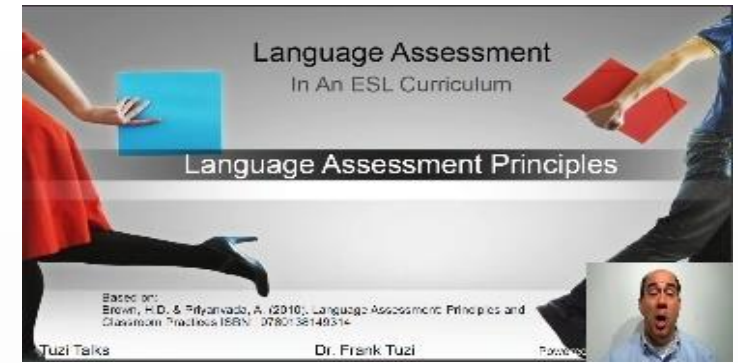
Formative and summative assessment

Peer-assessment, self assessment



The most debatable concepts or ideas

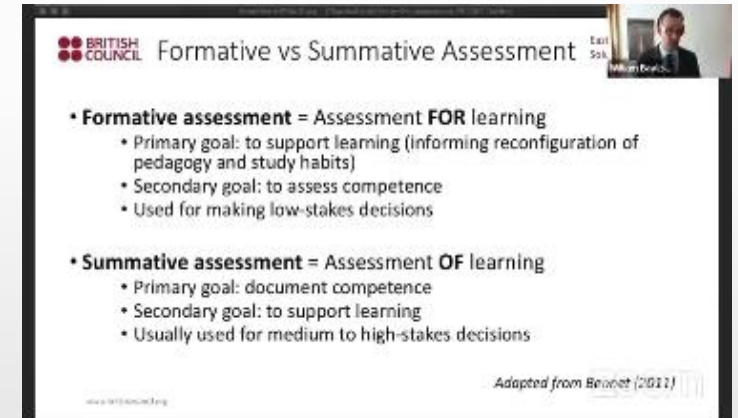
The most debatable concepts or ideas were focused on the video presented by Dr. Frank Tuzi related to the basic principles in testing and assessment.



These concepts were the most debatable not because they were unknown to the teachers, but because previously, they did not spend much time analyzing each of these principles in detail. It is necessary for them to know how to put them into practice when preparing an evaluation, or a test that can validate the proficiency in language.

The most highly accepted concepts or ideas

The most accepted concepts were the presented by William Bayliss in the video Formative and Summative Assessment. These aspects were the most accepted because they deal with what teachers face every day in teaching, summative assessment are given periodically to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know. Formative is part of the instructional process, it helps teachers in gathering information on students learning.



New ideas inspired by the study of the documents and group discussions

The most significant ones were the suggestions for the language department in relation of the multiplication of these workshops for the teachers in the territory of Artemisa. To cascade all the experiences in teaching, teachers in rural areas do not have the possibility of participating in these courses, or webinars because of the connectivity. To introduce a subject in the curriculum (optional-elective) that brings to the future professionals in education, tools in proficiency language assessment in Higher Education in Cuba.

Changes perceived in teachers' thinking

They analyzed each of the steps to follow for designing a test, an assessment or just an evaluation; it was organized a team work where different examples of projects are presented for obtaining better results on their application. The concerning for their personal and professional preparation in terms of proficiency in language is worth noting.

Changes perceived in teachers' practice

They prepared task development guides for each of the skills giving the instructions as clear as possible, and consulting the rating scales for the level that were planned. Their formative assessments during the semester were focused on checking students' understanding in the case that they should adapt teaching and learning process for the next course.

TARGETTED OUTCOME: write a basic letter/email of application with limited supporting details (B1)

Proposal for a writing task (interactive)

Objective: to write an email of application for a residency scholarship at the university with limited supporting details.

Construct: the learner should write an email giving simple information of immediate relevance, explaining with reasonable precision his/her application. They should be able to produce a paragraph with an appropriate range of vocabulary, coherence, accuracy in grammar, and spelling and mechanics. The task counts as successful completion if the learner shows the fulfilment of all this aspects.

Question:

You are having lateness problems to the first class in the morning because of the transportation. You could not assist to an important evaluation.

Write an email of application to the residency director of your university asking for a scholarship. In your email you should:

- Introduce your self
- Ask for the possibility of obtaining a residency scholarship
- Give reasons why you are requesting for a residency scholarship
- Ask, in a polite way, for a quick reply

Write your email in about 100 words. Remember that you have one hour to answer the test.

Changes perceived in students' Learning

A proficiency test was applied to a group of students that were part of the English policy, they were in the last academic year of their

professional training and had to face this test. As a result of the teachers preparation, the 100% of them (20 students) were certified in November 2021 with the A2 level from the CEFR and 2 of them that certified with B1 level during their second academic year.

	Carreras	Matrícula año terminar	Nivel A2 Cant. %		Nivel B1 Cant. %	
Universidad de Artemisa	Gestión S. Desarrollo	14	13	92,8	1	0,7
	Pedagogía-psicología	8	7	87,5	1	0,1
	total	22	20	90,9	2	0,9

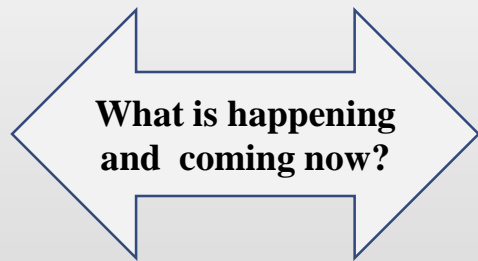


Some opinions from participants (results from the PNI applied to the group of teachers benefited with workshops)

Positive: - It was a wonderful possibility for the interaction in groups and exposed our experiences in teaching having as guide national and international standards. It should be planned this kind of workshop, at least, once in a month. Young teachers need to be part of this kind of preparation; it is an excellent way for our professional growing. It is well organized, taking into consideration important elements in proficiency language assessment in Higher Education.

Negative: it is not enough the time dedicated for each of the themes treated during the workshops. Not all the professors have a smart phone for working with these useful tools and be part of the technological development.

Interesting: it gives the possibility to wake up the passive knowledge that every teacher may have and that is waiting for an opportunity like this for realizing that we have a lot things to be learned and much more for putting into practice in our profession.



Proposal for an interactive task to enhance communication

Targeted outcome: suggest alternatives of what to do for preserving important natural resources as water and forest with friends. (A1)

Objective: the students should be able to make use of the communicative function making and responding to suggestions for preserving important natural resources with limited supporting details.


Context: students are grouped before the task (by teacher). In groups of six. Each group is going to receive a card with a concrete topic to discuss between them, make suggestions and respond to the ones presented by the other two groups. They should be able to take notes, to interact between them, with an appropriate range and accuracy within vocabulary and grammar. Taking care also with pronunciation (stress, rhythm, intonation). The task counts as successful completion if the students shows the fulfillment of all this aspects.

Task: You are receiving a card with a picture and a topic with some ideas for discussion in reference with environmental problems. Be ready to interact with the other two groups making and responding to suggestions for preserving the natural resource.

Note: Remember that you have 20 minutes to work with your group, 10 minutes for the presentation and 10 minutes for interaction.

Groupwork # 1

Topic: 22nd March. World Water Day



- Importance of water for life
- The use of water at home
- Suggestions for preserving this natural resource

Group work # 2


Topic: 21st March. International Forest Day



- Importance of forest for life
- Protected areas in our municipality
- Suggestions for preserving this natural resource

Group work # 3

Topic: Natural Resources



- What is a natural resource?
- Natural resources in our province
- Suggestions for preserving natural resources

Rating scale speaking					
A2	Asks and answers questions, responds to simple statements and indicates when he/she is following. Handles very short social exchanges, showing polite forms of greeting and address, but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going on his/her own accord. The interlocutor may have to reformulate the questions in order to be understood.	Produces a list of points that are mostly in a logical sequence; not all are necessarily connected or relevant. Links groups of words with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'. May overuse connectors or attempt to use other cohesive devices unsuccessfully. Makes evident pauses, false starts and reformulation.	Shows a limited range of concrete vocabulary and memorized phrases to express basic communicative needs and to communicate limited information. Shows frequent inaccuracies in word choice and collocation that may cause strain for the listener.	Shows simple sentence structures, with some memorized grammatical phrases and formulae. Still systematically makes basic grammar and syntax mistakes (e.g. tends to mix up tenses and forget to mark agreement), which the listener may misunderstand.	Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, provided the interlocutor makes an effort. Pronunciation of familiar words is clear. Otherwise, pronunciation and intonation show a strong influence of mother tongue.