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TESTING AS ONE OF THE METHODS IN STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT

The article discusses the issues of testing knowledge and skills of students in teaching a foreign language. The article also presents forms of control, provides a number of arguments in defense and against the excessive increase in test methods in the language learning classes for future specialists.

Keywords: *knowledge control, assessment, effectiveness of the educational process, advantages and disadvantages of tests.*

“If assessment is to be a positive force in education, it must be implemented properly. It cannot be used to merely sort students or to criticize education. Its goals must be to improve education. Rather than teach to the test, we must test what we teach”.

James E McLean, Robert E Lockwood

The relevance of the problem is due to the popularity of tests as one of the most popular methods in teaching foreign languages.

The first tests capable to assess knowledge, abilities and skills appeared at the beginning of the XX century. They gained popularity among teachers of schools and universities in England and the USA. The American psychologist E.A. Thorndike is considered the founder of pedagogical tests. In 1915–1930, in America, they became widespread, and this period is characterized as a real boom in the development of science and education. A lot of prominent scientists such as M. Bernstein, P. Blonsky, A. Boltunov, S. Gellerstein, G. Zalkind, I. Shpilrein contributed to the problem of test development.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the types of tests and the importance of students' assessment in teaching foreign languages at universities and also to identify the shortcomings of this form of control when working with students

Assessment is one of the most important factors in the learning process of any academic subject, including a foreign language. It allows not only to trace the progress, but also identify the gaps in knowledge, skills and abilities of students and thereby determine the necessary changes that should be made to the working methodology. Testing nowadays is considered as a system that covers the entire process of teaching. It performs the following functions: training, diagnostic, corrective, managerial, evaluative, stimulating, developing and educating.

Assessment is used to:

- inform and guide a teacher and a student; it provides teachers with information about students. To plan effectively teachers must know what the student misunderstands and where the problem is;

- help students set learning goals; students need to reflect on their learning and what needs to be done to achieve their learning goals;

- encourage: students will be motivated and confident learners when they see their progress rather than failure especially when compared to more successful peers.

The use of modern means of control in the process of teaching a foreign language is relevant for higher education. In a technical university, the study of foreign languages is a component of specialist training and ensures that a graduate of

the university achieves a communicative competence that allows the use of a foreign language in professional activities.

Much attention is paid to the language training of future specialists at Admiral Makarov National University of Shipbuilding. Different methods are used and each of them has its advantages. A lot of effort is also made to assess the level of competence of our students. Therefore many forms of control are practiced: oral questioning, frontal questioning, work in pairs, final control, word dictation, etc. The authors' experience shows that oral questioning and written work are used much more often than other types of control. Oral questioning does not always provide a complete picture of learning information and is time-consuming; written work requires a lot of time to verify it. These methods may not lead to an objective assessment of the knowledge gained.

Tests can be successfully used for the ongoing, periodic and final assessment. With the help of tests, we can check students' knowledge and monitor their progress or regress. Testing is important to consolidate, improve the knowledge, skills and identify weak areas. The authors' experience shows that in higher educational institutions, students are more conscious about their examination results, since being a university student sets high standards for their mental activity and ability to study independently.

There are many types of tests, so the choice depends on the program, methodology, and tutorials that were used in the learning process.

Multiple-choice tests

They are one of the most common forms of tests that are taken in any classroom. These tests are taken in order to assess the complex concepts as well as the simple understandings of the student. Multiple-choice tests are specially designed to determine the readiness of a student to answer a specific question. Since all the possible answers are given, it does not take much time calculating and devising a new answer.

Matching tests

Matching tests are another important form of tests that can be seen in any classroom. Matching tests are designed and taken in order to assess the student's understanding of relation between events and dates, events and places, and so on.

True-False tests

True-False tests are specially designed to determine the decision of a student on a specific question. This is probably one of the best ways to judge the concepts of a student. Most of the true-false tests are timed so that students can make quick decisions on whatever concepts they have. Some true-false tests also include 'remarks' or 'explanation' column in the worksheet. This allows the student to clear out his/her reason why the answer to the specific question is true or false.

Short-answer tests

These tests include questions, answers of which can be given in two to three lines. These tests are designed to determine the brief but comprehensive answer to any specific question or concept.

Oral Exams

Oral exams are a great way to assess the conceptual framework and learning of a student. Written tests may not give a closer insight of the student's conceptual framework and learning. But when a teacher hears to the concepts and ideas of student, it gives a more clear result.

Essay Tests

Essay tests, which are also known as assignments are designed in order to assess the student capabilities of interpreting objective, collecting material, sorting material, and finally preparing the conclusion of the assignment.

Performance tests

Performance tests are devised in order to assess the expertise of a student in a specific experiment. A specific time period is given to the student in order to conduct the experiment with maximum proficiency.

Testing can also be classified by purpose and it has three types: placement test, interim and final testing. Placement testing is conducted in the first year at the

beginning of the year, the purpose of testing is to determine the level of knowledge and skills of students, according to the test students are divided into levels – elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate.

Interim control is carried out at the end of the first, second and third semesters. Its purpose is to determine the level of mastering the program over the past period. The final test is conducted at the end of the second year of study, and its results are counted as an examination grade.

As practical experience shows, the testing method has many advantages. Being an integral part of the lesson, it enables students to work at their own pace, with a gradual transition from one level of knowledge to another. Test items give time to think about how well the material is mastered. When tests are used to consolidate language knowledge, the teacher can correct and plan the further learning process in accordance with the results of the tests and pay more attention to the material which is learned not good enough.

The absence of time-consuming verification of written works allows to conduct tests quite often and it creates a feeling of total control of knowledge among students. Testing can also eliminate subjectivity and allows you to get rid of psychological problems associated with the personal relations of a student and a teacher, which cannot always be positive.

Like any other type of control, testing takes time, but it should be considered as part of the learning process. Motivation to perform the tasks well, depends on how we use the test results. If testing is seen as a competition between students, then they may not cause motivation, and if testing is used as an opportunity to identify students' progress, then they motivate them and make them think about how to increase their level of knowledge.

Despite many advantages, testing has some drawbacks, which are considered below:

- When performing tests, there is a chance of guessing: the student presents only the answers. The teacher does not trace how students make one or another

choice. This drawback is typical for tests consisting of tasks to select the correct answer from the proposed ones.

– The preparation of tests is often based on a mental function called recognition, so some methodologists believe that students get used to working with ready-made formulations and are unable to present the knowledge received in any other way.

– Subjectivism is often found in the content of the tests, their selection and instructions for test tasks, much also depends on the specific test system and time given to control knowledge.

– There is a danger of automatic errors. For example, the student did not understand the instructions and began to respond completely differently from what the standard procedure requires.

– Lack of opportunity to reveal personality when performing standard tasks.

It should also be noted that tests make it possible to check a limited area of knowledge and skills. The teacher cannot evaluate the students' ability to solve problems and build a logically connected answer taking into account only test results.

The authors of the article came to the conclusion that although there are many types of tests to choose from the shortcomings of this form of control are also obvious. In our opinion, tests cannot replace other forms of control; however, they open up many new opportunities for the teacher who holds exams or end of lesson quizzes, as they eliminate difficulties of oral and written answers to the question posed.

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Тестування як один із методів оцінювання знань студентів

У статті розглядаються питання тестування знань, умінь і навичок в процесі вивчення іноземної мови, також представлені форми контролю; наводиться ряд аргументів за та проти використання тестових методик на заняттях з мовної підготовки майбутніх фахівців.

***Ключові слова:** контроль знань, тестові методики, оцінювання, ефективність навчального процесу, переваги і недоліки процесу тестування.*