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## TO THE PROBLEM OF ASSESSING COMPETENCIES IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES ONLINE

***Abstract.** The author has studied the problem of assessment of some competencies in the process of teaching foreign languages online. A lion's share of assistance under such force majeure circumstances came from Pearson Education Limited that has been for more than 15 years a very reliable, actual, innovative partner of the Foreign Languages and Cross-Cultural Communication Department. The author participated in a 12-hour Online English Language Teacher Training Course, that focuses on the problems of assessment of basic competencies of teaching foreign languages online. A very valuable theoretical document donated by DinternalPearson is the table of international standards on the assessment of basic competencies in the process of teaching foreign languages online.*

***Key words:** assessment, competence, innovative, basic, international standards.*

***Анотація.** Авторка вивчала тему оцінки деяких компетенцій у процесі викладання іноземних мов онлайн. Лєвова доля допомоги викладачам під час таких надзвичайних ситуацій, як пандемія, прийшла від компанії Dinternal Pearson, яка протягом більш ніж 15 років є надійним, сучасним, інноваційним партнером викладачів кафедри іноземних мов і міжкультурної комунікації. Авторка брала участь у 12-годинному вебінарі для викладачів англійської мови, присвяченому темі оцінки основних компетенцій при викладанні іноземних мов онлайн. Дуже цінним теоретичним документом, який надає компанія Dinternal Pearson, є таблиця міжнародних стандартів з оцінювання головних мовних компетенцій.*

*Ключові слова: оцінка, компетенція, інноваційний, головний, міжнародні стандарти.*

Beginning with the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 universities, colleges, primary, secondary schools started their performance on-line not only in Ukraine but worldwide. It was, is, and will be a very crucial challenge for teachers, institutions and schools, university administrations. Teachers are the front line facing this challenge. Due to pandemic reality, Google and the other three most world spread search engines have presented a lot of educational platforms for teaching online. But as Google is the world's most popular search engine we are working now mostly with Zoom, and Google meet. Google began as a search project in 1996 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, who were two Ph. D. students at Stanford University. They developed a search engine algorithm that ranked Web pages not just by content and keywords, but by how many other Web pages linked to each page.

**Pearson, Dinternal Education** company and its online service is most helpful in giving methodical, pedagogical advice and educational literature. The author participated in more than a hundred webinars offered by the company on a free basis. In June 2020 the author took part in a 12-hour webinar dedicated to a very burning topic: assessment, which is becoming very important during online lessons. The webinar was presented by one of the most innovative and interesting presenters Olena Mikhodui. If to use a formal explanation, assessment «...is an integral part of instruction, as it determines whether or not the goals of education are being met. Assessment affects our decisions about grades, placement, advancement, instructional needs, and curriculum». [1]

Thinking about assessment we may divide the process into 4 steps.

**Step 1:** Clearly define and identify the learning outcomes.

**Step 2:** Select appropriate assessment measures and assess the learning outcomes.

**Step 3:** Analyze the results of the outcomes assessed.

**Step 4:** Adjust or improve programs following the results of the learning outcomes assessed.

And we again come to the understanding that any type of assessment is a very complex process of gathering and discussing information from diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what our students know, understand, and can use their knowledge as a very important result of their educational experience.

According to the experts of American Website Pedagogue «Assessment is a key part of today's educational system. Assessment serves as an individual evaluation system».

So, what's really at the heart of all these assessments?

The purpose of assessment is to gather relevant information about student performance or progress. After receiving this information, teachers can reflect on each student's level of achievement, as well as on specific inclinations of the group, to customize their teaching plans. To be honest, we, teachers, are tightly connected with the continuous assessment that provides day-to-day feedback about the learning

and teaching process. Assessment can reinforce the efficacy of teaching and learning. It also encourages the understanding of teaching as a formative process that evolves over time with feedback and input from students. This creates good classroom rapport. Student assessments are necessary because:

Continuous assessment provides day-to-day feedback about the learning and teaching process. This creates good classroom rapport. Student assessments are necessary because:

Throughout a lesson, the teacher might want to check for understanding by using a formative assessment.

Students who are experiencing difficulties in learning may benefit from the administration of a diagnostic test, which will be able to detect learning issues such as reading comprehension problems, an inability to remember written or spoken words, hearing or speech difficulties, and problems with hand-eye coordination.

Teachers may also want to use informal assessment techniques. Using self-assessment, students express what they think about their learning process and what they should work on. Using peer assessment, students get information from their classmates about what areas they should revise and what areas they're good at.

As we teach B1 and B2 students of the 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of studies, and C1 and C2 students of senior 3<sup>d</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year of studies, we should follow the useful tips on assessment based on international standards. Let me share with you the tips suggested by presenters from Pearson, Dinternal Education.

#### ASSESSMENT

- Raise students' awareness of the assessment criteria.
- Narrow the focus — apply 1 assessment criteria at a time.
- Tell students what you will be assessing.
- Interaction: teach students to clarify, take turns, buy time, start/close a conversation appropriately.
- See where your students are at the moment before applying for an exam (e.g *B1 – start, middle, or end of the course*).

#### 1. MONOLOGUE

##### WHAT'S TESTED:

Ability to speak continuously about matters of personal information and interest.

##### PROCEDURE:

1. The examiner asks 1 main question.
2. The test taker makes at least 1 long turn (40–50 sec — B1, 50–60 sec — B2).
3. The examiner will ask one or some follow-up questions to encourage a test taker to continue talking.

##### COMMON MISTAKES:

- deviation from the topic;
- speaking for less time than expected.

Assessing students' speaking performance we should take into account the following:

- We should raise students' awareness of the assessment criteria.

- Narrow the goal; apply 1 assessment at a time.
- Necessarily tell the students what you are planning to assess.
- If to speak about interaction, we should teach students to clarify the idea, take turns, buy time, start or close the conversation appropriately.

If monologue is tested, then we assess the ability to speak continuously about matters of personal information and interest and about the material already studied and revised. If we are to mention common mistakes, we should pay attention to the ability of our students not to deviate from the topic and to present the idea for not less time than expected.

In assessing discussion, we assess the ability to discuss a concrete idea and teach our students not to change their opinion during the discussion and agree with whatever we, teachers, propose. It's very wrongful if our students have limited ability or no use at all of any turn-taking phrases.

Level 2 B1	<p><i>Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, university, leisure, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst traveling in an area where the language is spoken.</i></p> <p><i>Can produce a simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest.</i></p> <p><i>Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.</i></p>
Level 3 B2	<p><i>Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization.</i></p> <p><i>Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.</i></p> <p><i>Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</i></p>
Level 4 C1	<p><i>Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning.</i></p> <p><i>Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.</i></p> <p><i>Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes.</i></p> <p><i>Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices.</i></p>
Level 5 C2	<p><i>Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.</i></p> <p><i>Can summarise information from different spoken or written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.</i></p> <p><i>Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently, and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.</i></p>

**Pearson, Dinternal Education** company helps the teachers to assess speaking competencies using international standards for PTE General speaking tests.

### Marking Criteria Grid for PTE General SPEAKING TEST

<p><b>Marking Scale for PTE G Levels A1 — L4:</b></p> <p>1. = the performance is below the level</p> <p>2. = the performance is just at the level</p> <p><b>3. = the performance clearly matches the level</b></p> <p>1. = the performance is almost at the next level</p> <p>2. = the performance is above the level</p> <p>0. = SILENCE/IRRELEVANT/NON-ENGLISH</p>	<p><b>Marking Scale for PTE G Level L5:</b></p> <p>1. = the performance is below the level</p> <p>2. = the performance is just at the level</p> <p><b>3. = the performance clearly matches the level</b></p> <p>0. = SILENCE/IRRELEVANT/ NON-ENGLISH</p>
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PTE General (CEFR level)	General criteria				
	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	RANGE	ACCURACY	PHONOLOGICAL CONTROL
<b>SCORE POINTS</b>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<b>Level 2 (B1)</b>	Can keep going comprehensively, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.	Can initiate, maintain and close the simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations.	Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if occasional mispronunciations occur.
<b>Level 3 (B2)</b>	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although s/he can be hesitant as s/he searches for patterns and expressions. There are few noticeably long pauses.	Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate, and end conversation when s/he needs to, though s/he may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.	Has sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.	Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical and lexical control. Do not make errors that cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.	Has acquired a clear, natural pronunciation and intonation.
<b>Level 4 (C1)</b>	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject may hinder a natural smooth flow of language.	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his/her remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional, or leisure topics without having to restrict what s/he wants to say.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical and lexical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot and generally corrected when they occur.	Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning.

<b>Level 5</b> (C2)	Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and into national cues apparently effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turn taking, referencing, allusion making, etc.	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.	Maintains consistent grammatical and lexical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).	Speech is immediately and certainly understood. Speaker uses assimilation, and deletions comparable to the continuous speech from a L1 speaker.
<b>SCORE POINTS</b> (Level 5)	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
<b>SCORE POINTS</b> (levels A1 – L4)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

So, summarizing the above-mentioned tips, we, teachers feel equipped with the most advanced Criteria Grid for PTE General SPEAKING TEST.

The author would like to express her gratitude for most useful tips on assessment criteria as working online demands more flexibility, more innovative approaches, more advanced ideas on how to be up to the most interesting methodical performance.

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## ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ІТ-ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ НА ЗАНЯТТЯХ З ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ ЯК ЗАСІБ ФОРМУВАННЯ ІНТЕЛЕКТУАЛЬНОГО КАПІТАЛУ

*Анотація.* Перелічено освітні проблеми сучасності, пов'язані з формуванням людського капіталу. Виділено основні принципи та складові навчального процесу. Висвітлено переваги викладання іноземних мов із використанням інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій. Розкрита роль освіти XXI століття у розвитку інтелектуального капіталу.

*Ключові слова:* інтелектуальний капітал, людський капітал, інформаційні технології, інформація, матеріальні активи.