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Learning assessment practices: challenges

Abstract. In a current century, lecturers use different criteria to evaluate students. Assessment is a strong learning tool that is used to enhance education. Overall process of student assessment should consist of concrete goals and educational objectives. Identifying methods that are used for assessment is important to get the most effective evaluation of student's work during learning process. The purpose of this article is to show variety of methods of learning assessment and to suggest own method of assessment, based on knowledge of the ones that are currently in use. As an example, results of 2 groups of master degree program students were taken in to analysis to compare different methods of assessment.

Keywords: assessment, summative assessment, learning, educational system, criteria, English classes, academic writing.

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Nowadays, importance of learning assessment plays a key factor in a development of educational system in Kazakhstan. During the last 10 years Kazakhstan has been changing the way of evaluation and implemented new approaches of learning process. For instance, in 2009, summative assessment was implemented to curriculum in recently-opened Intellectual School of the first President, which became a platform for the further integration of this assessment in all other schools around Kazakhstan. On the other hand, universities' system of assessment has not changed and is needed of innovations in learning process. As a result it is not a surprise that human needs testing to improve their achievement and that necessity was the cause of birth of process of assessment.

Assessment for learning is vital teaching strategies that help academic writing instructor and master students estimate progress in terms of understanding and skills acquisition, providing guidance and feedback for subsequent teaching and learning. As learning is taking place, academic writing instructors need information to assess whether their teaching strategies are working. They also need information about the current understanding of individual master students and groups of master students so they can identify the most relevant next steps for learning. In addition, master students need feedback to observe their own success in learning and to know how to improve.

When master or bachelor degree students have English classes, they definitely get an assessment. The first thing that comes to mind for many people when they think of "classroom assessment" is a midterm or end-of-course exam, used by the lecturer for summative grading purposes. But such practices represent only a fraction of the kinds of assessment that occur on an ongoing basis in an effective classroom. The focus is on assessments used by academic writing instructors to support instruction and learning, also referred to as formative assessment. Such assessment offers considerable potential for improving learner learning when informed by research and theory on how master students develop subject matter competence. Academic writing instructors make observations of learner understanding and performance in a variety of ways: from classroom dialogue, questioning, seatwork and homework assignments, formal tests, projects and so on.

Educational system in L.N.Gumilyov Eurasian National University works on requirements from Ministry of Education and science. As a consequence, curriculums are signed and claimed by this organ. However, criteria of assessment comply with Bologna process, which ENU has ratified. These criterions have been written in syllabus, which is guide to your academic course. It contains all valuable information about specific course and defines expectations and responsibilities.

In the process of getting master degree English classes are important, because applicants are obliged to pass English exam. Regarding Bologna process academic writing instructors evaluate master students by above mentioned criterions from syllabus. By the way, department of concrete faculty can add specific methods of assessment. For example, department of foreign languages introduce their own assessment of self-tasks given to master students.

Table 1

Evaluation of self-tasks on a course «Academic writing»

Titles	Score
Deadline	10
Lecturer's motivational points	10
Style	20
Structure	20
Existence of arguments	20
Advanced academic English (professional vocabulary, transition tools)	20
Total score	100
Note: exceeding / shortage of words or change given topic are evaluated from 0% to 5% (due to waste of time)	

To begin with, let's conduct comparative analysis of various evaluating systems. It includes European assessment system, Eurasian University's system, lecturer's methodic and the one that is suggested. As an example, essays of group A on the topic «My personal contribution to Kazakhstani society» were used.

Table 2

Various assessments on group A master students

Name	European standards	Eurasian National University after L.N. Gumilyov	Lecturer's assessment	Suggested assessment
Learner 1	8	18	4	40
Learner 2	20	40	12	65
Learner 3	8	18	5	50
Learner 4	20	37	12	55
Learner 5	10	20	13	50
Learner 6	25	45	17	75
Learner 7	7	15	4	35
Learner 8	15	25	8	50
Learner 9	23	40	15	72
Learner 10	7	15	5	35
Learner 11	12	20	7	45
Learner 12	22	40	15	70
Learner 13	35	60	20	80

As you can see from the diagram the highest marks have been shown in suggested elaborations and the lowest ones at lecturer's assessment. Because at English classes, we have a dual system as a mix of European and ENU systems, where you can get 25 percent at practice, 49 for your attending and 26 for your writing assignments.

Table 3

Structure of assessment criteria

Criteria	European assessment	ENU after L.N. Gumilyov	English classes assessment
Deadline	-	10	-
Layout of document	5	10	-
Style	15	20	5
Structure	10	20	5
Arguments	20	20	7
Academic writing	10	20	9

After examining assessment criteria presented in table 3, we can draw the following conclusions. In knowledge assessment systems, academic writing instructors differently focus on certain positions, preferring one to another. For example, the ENU's system encourages deadlines for completing tasks and as a reward, puts an additional 10 points. While in European and lecturer's assessments there are no bonuses for that. Whilst lecturer's assessment maximum number of points gives to academic writing, which is relating to concrete topic.

In suggested assessment system, 100 points was divided into 4 blocks. The first block implies the lowest score, if the topic is not disclosed and there are no relevant conclusions. And a maximum of 100 points is given for full disclosure of the topic with confirmations, correct structure, and so on.

Table 4

Developed criteria

Suggested assessment	Criteria
25	Does not take a stand or provide context
50	Makes a stand, but could be more powerful
75	Makes strong stand and defines the context in introductory paragraph
100	Makes a strong stand and defines the context in the introductory paragraph. Position is restated throughout and reinforced with examples and included in the conclusion

Table 5

Master students' assessments by different systems of evaluation

Name	European standards	L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University	English classes	Our own assessment
Learner 1	8	18	4	40
Learner 2	20	40	12	65
Learner 3	8	18	5	50
Learner 4	20	37	12	55
Learner 5	10	20	13	50
Learner 6	25	45	17	75
Learner 7	7	15	4	35

Learner 8	15	25	8	50
Learner 9	23	40	15	72
Learner 10	7	15	5	35
Learner 11	12	20	7	45
Learner 12	22	40	15	70
Learner 13	35	60	20	80

As an example, learner 6 got 17 balls according to lecturer's system of evaluation and this is one of the best results in a researched group. It can be explained due to the fact that learner pointed his own contribution at this moment and also the amount of work done: «As an independent Public Relations consultant I have more than 12 years of experience in media communications. Not only that, but also, I am the author of several publications in ecology field. As lecturer-teacher at School-children's Palace I teach them PR issues, SMM, writing articles, scenarios, sites construction». The highest mark of 20 balls was taken by learner 13. This score can be justified by his academic literacy, arguments, structure: «I contributed to obtaining licenses for the opening of new specialties in the direction of bachelor, master, doctoral studies, in which master students have already entered»; «Despite of all difficulties, the lecturer boldly chooses the path that will serve humanity and society».

Let's turn to master students with the lowest marks 4 and 5. As we see from a table above, learner 7 got 4 balls because his essay does not contain data on his personal contribution, there is no academic literacy, no using of transition words and plus to all the above mentioned, text is too extensive. It does not have exact positions. That is a fragment from his essay: «The monopoly these in the geopolitical space depends on their economic level, which is directly related to the level of development of education». As a continuation, let's see learner number 10, who received 5 points. Here we see a similar situation with learner 7. There is also lack of a personal contribution and content is too superficially. For example: «New technologies and level of life requires transformation of traditional teaching into new ways of education through interactive communication». The difference of one point is due to the fact that learner 10 has a more clearly built structure.

Table 6

Assessment for practice of group 1

Group 1	Module Test 1	Module Test 2	Examination	Final Grade
Learner 1	76.5	82.21	82	80
Learner 2	69.75	79.64	72	74
Learner 3	84.33	90.36	90	88
Learner 4	77.83	82	75	78
Learner 5	62.17	76.57	60	65
Learner 6	85.59	94.93	97	93
Learner 7	69.42	82.36	50	66
Learner 8	94.5	96.67	97	96
Learner 9	80.58	84.29	90	85
Learner 10	94.5	95.64	97	96
Learner 11	73.96	83.76	85	81
Learner 12	79	80.64	87	83
Learner 13	52.92	74	30	0
Learner 14	70.71	80.36	85	80
Learner 15	79.42	84.86	85	83

Learner 16	94.5	97.12	97	96
Average score	77.86	85.34	79.94	77.75

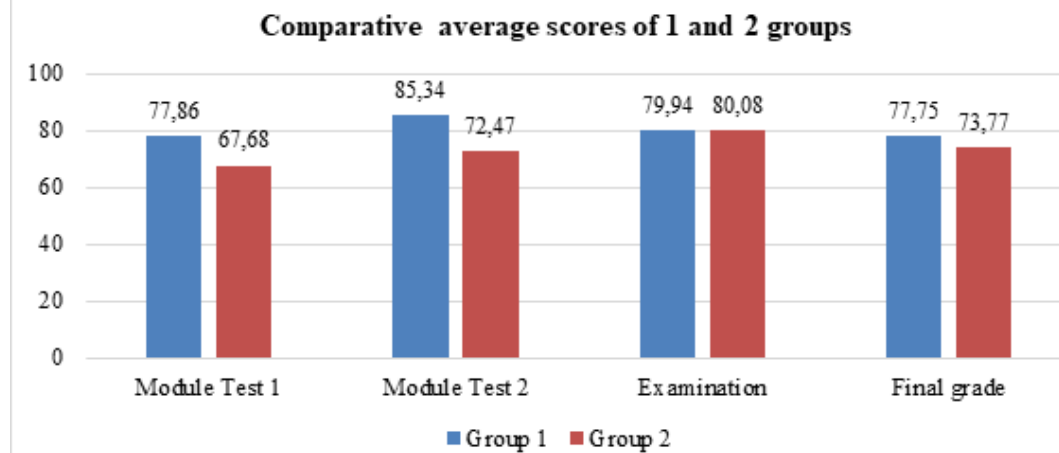
As we see, from the table 6, there is a fluctuation in master students' scores as it is changing during the period of learning. Table includes data of 16 master students and 4 columns with their grades. Firstly, let's take a look at average scores for each column. There is a positive trend in module tests as ratings improved from 77,86 to 85,34. However, thereafter trend changed the direction in an opposite as scores dropped in examination and as a result it affected the final grade.

Table 7

Assessment for practice of group 2

Group 2	Module Test 1	Module Test 2	Examination	Final Grade
Learner 1	72.9	77.52	80	77
Learner 2	89.67	85.46	97	92
Learner 3	89.67	82.7	97	90
Learner 4	49.5	63.27	75	64
Learner 5	53.75	66.48	70	64
Learner 6	88.92	89.67	97	92
Learner 7	62.08	73.13	88	76
Learner 8	67.5	77.87	90	80
Learner 9	78.58	78.03	85	81
Learner 10	93.08	89.02	97	93
Learner 11	69.17	82.81	80	78
Learner 12	1.25	0	non-admission	0
Learner 13	65	76.18	85	72
Average score	67.68	72.47	80.08	73.77

The table above gives information about learner's grades on a practice. We observe positive tendency. Table includes data of 13 master students and 4 columns with their grades. Chart shows a gradual rise in average points, which led to the middle score on a final exam to 73,77. Noteworthy influence was made by learner 12, because his grades were 1,25 and 0 on module tests and it aligned to non-admission to exam. As a result his scores seriously damaged average total of all master students.



Supplied diagram represents 4 bars of mid grades of group 1 compared with group 2. Firstly, let's consider results on a module test 1, which depicts that group 1 overall showed a better

result than group 2 on 10,18. Secondly, by using data based on module test 2, the difference between 2 groups moved upward. As for examination results, we observe steadiness and scores are almost equal. Taking into consideration all mentioned above final grades were 77,75 and 73,77, for group 1 and 2 comparatively.

Table 8

Assessment of self-made work of master students from group 1-2

Group 1	MT1	MT 2	Group 2	MT1	MT2
Learner 1	78	79.43	Learner 1	71.5	77.71
Learner 2	64.5	74.29	Learner 2	84.33	74.57
Learner 3	73.67	90.71	Learner 3	84.33	74.29
Learner 4	75.67	84	Learner 4	29	50.57
Learner 5	54.33	73.14	Learner 5	42.5	60
Learner 6	67.67	94.86	Learner 6	82.83	90.71
Learner 7	68.83	79.71	Learner 7	49.17	65.43
Learner 8	92	96.14	Learner 8	60	74.86
Learner 9	76.17	88.57	Learner 9	67.17	69.71
Learner 10	92	94.29	Learner 10	91.17	87.86
Learner 11	69.33	82.43	Learner 11	63.33	79.71
Learner 12	68	76.29	Learner 12	2.5	0
Learner 13	50.83	61	Learner 13	33.33	71.14
Learner 14	58.83	80.71			
Learner 15	75.33	84.71			
Learner 16	92	97.14			
Average score	72.32	83.60	Average score	58.48	67.42

The provided table data presents how master students from 2 groups were passing their self-made works. The different number of master students in groups affected analysis. Despite this fact some conclusions were constructed. First of all, overall results for both groups were enhanced. Even though, all master students from group 1 improved their results on module test 2 in comparison with module test 1. Overall it led to increase in 11.28 points. Whereas there were few master students from group 2 who went down on grades on module test 2. However it did not affect the main trend of the data and still total mid points of the group had gone up from 58.48 to 67.42. Also, among all master students there were the ones who passed IELTS on 7.0 +. However, it had not created a significant gap in scores between them and ones who had not passed that exam yet. Thus, the evidence of certificates of IELTS or TOEFL does not show the real knowledge of English. Because it requires concrete techniques to pass it, while it does not show the real understanding of English at all.

The practice of teaching an English language has led to the fact that few graduate master students can freely use an English language in everyday communication. Indeed, university is a final step before a person enters a professional activity and it is responsibility of university to provide high level of proficiency in an English language. As for real, the assessment that the learner receives during his studies at university does not reflect real knowledge. Because, based on the analysis, we see that academic writing instructors can encourage master students, sometimes they just overestimate some of master students compared to others. This suggests that assessment system of knowledge should be revised. The phrase “with a dictionary” has become a common answer to the question about the level of knowledge of an English language, which indicates the lack of practical knowledge of a foreign language in the overwhelming majority of university

graduates. This leads to the conclusion about trends and accents in teaching namely, the lack of a communicative emphasis an orientation on passing exam, rather than mastering real practical skills, focusing on critical thinking, vocabulary expansion, reading, translation and generally good use of academic skills.

That is why, logically should be given a recommendation of improving system of assessment and efficient suggestion can be implementation of self-assessment. The aim of introducing self-assessment in English classes is to give opportunities for master students to develop skills based on their own estimations. In a process of self-assessment master students are supposed to evaluate both process and product of their learning. Although mentioning the fact that product's assess is usually defined as an objective of lecturer, integration of learner assessment in a period of learning stimulates master students to estimate their own work as well as the process that conducts them to the result. Furthermore, self-assessment develops feeling of involvement in a process of somebody's learning and can bring significant investments by learner. It allows master students to build transmissible skills in other spheres of learning that include group projects and teamwork, critical thinking and problem-solving, as well as leadership roles in the teaching and learning process.

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Оқытуды бағалау практикасы: мәселелері

Аннотация. Қазіргі уақытта оқытушылар студенттерді бағалау үшін әртүрлі критерийлерді пайдаланады. Бағалау-білімді жақсарту үшін пайдаланылатын қуатты оқыту құралы. Оқушыларды бағалаудың жалпы процесі білім берудің нақты мақсаттары мен міндеттерінен тұруы тиіс. Бағалау үшін қолданылатын әдістерді анықтау оқу үрдісінде студенттің жұмысын тиімді бағалауды анықтау үшін маңызды. Бұл мақаланың мақсаты - оқытуды бағалау әдістерінің алуан түрлілігін көрсету және қазіргі уақытта қолданылатын білімдерге негізделген жеке бағалау әдісін ұсыну. Мысал ретінде бағалаудың әртүрлі әдістерін салыстыру мақсатында талдау үшін магистранттардың 2 тобының нәтижелері алынды.

Түйін сөздер: бағалау, қорытынды баға, оқу, білім беру жүйесі, критериялар, ағылшын тілінің сыныптары, академиялық хат.

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Практика оценки обучения: проблемы

Аннотация. В настоящее время преподаватели используют различные критерии для оценки студентов. Оценка является мощным инструментом обучения, который используется для улучшения образования. Общий процесс оценки учащихся должен состоять из конкретных целей и задач образования. Выявление методов, которые используются для оценки, важно для получения наиболее эффективной оценки работы студента в процессе обучения. Цель данной статьи - показать разнообразие методов оценки обучения и предложить собственный метод оценки, основанный на знании тех, которые используются в настоящее время. Для анализа были взяты результаты 2 групп магистрантов с целью сравнения различных методов оценки.

Ключевые слова: оценка, суммативное оценивание, обучение, система образования, критерии, классы английского языка, академическое письмо.

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