**Turkestan Region, Kazygurt, school named after K. Satbayev**

**REPORT**

**Theme: “Motivating students through Formative Assessment”**

**Prepared by: Abdullayeva Zhuldyz**

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**Introduction**

According to the latest educational standards, Kazakh primary and secondary students are to acquire such learning (metacognitive, not subject-specific) skills as the ability to set and achieve goals, plan activities accordingly, adjust behaviour when necessary, develop self-regulation and self-control, self-assessment and peer-assessment skills. University graduates are to be competent in goal-setting, planning, evaluation, and reflection. Assessment being a highly powerful tool in education, it can be used for the purpose of development of metacognitive skills and life-long competences. But it is hardly feasible that traditional assessment tools such as tests can do the task. The tool that helps the teacher and the students track if the desired skills are being developed and to what extent is formative assessment.

Several researchers have shown that formative assessment is essential in ESL/EFL teaching and learning (Bachman, 1990; Gattullo, 2000; Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000). As Cheng, Rogers, and Hu (2004, p. 361) stated: “every model of the teaching-learning process requires that teachers base their decisions–instructional, grading, and reporting–on some knowledge of students’ attainment of and progress towards desired learning outcomes”. Therefore, teachers should continuously assess their students in order to help teaching and learning progress (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007). So, formative assessment is mainly conducted in the context of classroom. But what is done in the classroom (with the purpose of assessing the students) is not always in favor of forming students’ learning; in another word, assessment practices in the classroom are not formative all the time. For instance, as Brown (2004) categorized, classroom assessment can have diagnostic or achievement purposes, or even measure proficiency purposes. In order to discuss about different aspects of each kind of assessment, this article first presents definitions of assessment and then different types of assessment. At last, an overview of the effects of formative assessment on EFL/ESL teaching and learning will be presented.

**Coming to terms with terms**

According to Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, assessment is “a systematic approach to collecting information and making inferences about the ability of a student or a quality or success of a teaching course on the basis of various sources of evidence” (Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, p. 35). It is a wider notion than testing, which is applying a test, “a procedure for measuring ability, knowledge or performance” (Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, p. 546).

Michael Scrivener introduced the terms formative and summative evaluation in 1967. Today the terms summative and formative assessment are preferred (e.g. Ur, 2012). Summative and formative assessment are considered two opposite ends of a continuum. Firstly, they have different purposes: the purpose of summative assessment is to measure achievement at the end of a period of learning, while formative assessment aims at enhancing learning by providing feedback. Secondly,

summative assessment is carried out at the end of a period of study, while formative assessment is an ongoing process that penetrates learning. Finally, it it believed that summative assessment is for demonstrating learning results to the outside audience, whereas formative assessment is for “inclass” use, that is, it gives information to the students and the teacher. The result of the former is a grade, the main outcome of the latter are suggestions for further improvement. Some scholars claim that summative assessment is assessment of learning, while formative assessment is assessment for

learning (e.g. Greenstein, 2010).

End-of-year tests, international examinations and school-leaving exams are all examples of summative assessment. Formative assessment involves a wide range of techniques, which are carried out before, while and after actual teaching, the examples of which will be provided later in this article.

Traditional Kazakh pedagogy distinguishes between preliminary, continuous and summative assessment. There is no notion of formative assessment, but the importance of feedback when continuous assessment is carried out is also emphasized (Талызина, 1998). Feedback is information on the previous performance that can be used to modify future performance (Wiliam, 2011). Feedback is an essential part of formative assessment.

Fishman and Golub (Фишман, Голуб, 2007) compare education to growing plants. Summative assessment is just measuring the growth, which doesn't affect the process of growing, while formative assessment is like feeding and watering, that directly influence growth. The more effort one makes when taking care of plants, the more fruit they will collect. The more feedback students get on their actions, the better their learning will be.

When students and some teachers think of assessment, they might remember the pressure of final exams. Unpleasant memories of several exams in a couple of days usually make students’ faces fall, and thinking about preparing and marking exams make teachers feel exhausted. But the fact is that, as Brown (2004) stated, testing and assessment are different. Bachman (2004) defined assessment as “a process of collecting information about something that we are interested in, according to procedures that are systematic and substantially grounded” (pp. 6-7). The result of an assessment procedure can be a score or a verbal description. Ari Huhta (as cited in Spolsky & Hult, 2008) referred to assessment as “all kinds of procedures used to assess individuals (e.g., informal observations, self-assessments, quizzes, interviews, tests)” (p. 469). Teachers assess their students every session. However, testing is a way of conducting assessment which is technically associated with definite timing and settled procedures (Brown, 2004). As Huhta defined “tests denote a particular type of formal, often carefully designed instruments” (Spolsky & Hult, 2008, p. 469). When teachers consider an assessment task, they usually have some questions in their mind such as: “When and how often shall we assess the students?”, or “How should we conduct an assessment procedure?” The question of “What” and “Why” rarely come to teachers’ mind (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). The reason of not asking what-question is quiet clear as teachers usually know what they want the learners to learn. However, it is somehow vague that why teachers do not ask why-questions; they either know the answer or seldom consider the reason of assessment (Ibid). Why-question is important since it will define the decision to be made about the outcomes of an assessment. The very first use of language assessment is to make decisions for individuals (micro-evaluation), programs (macroevaluation), and other stakeholders (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). It can be used to select individuals, place them into appropriate course of study, make changes in instruction, predict future performance of test-takers, make changes in educational programs (formative or summative decisions), to formulate new research questions, and modify the understanding of a specific language phenomenon (Bachman, 2004). Therefore, the decision going to be made is so essential that it can define type of assessment. In the following sections, classifications of assessment are presented based on the decisions which are going to be made according to their outcomes.

**FORMAL VS. INFORMAL ASSESSMENT**

Formal assessments are systematically planned and designed to get information about students’ achievement in predetermined times. Brown (2004) described formal assessment as tournaments in tennis, and made a distinction between formal assessment and testing. He considered all kinds of tests as formal assessment, but this is not true vice versa; i.e. formal assessment is not necessary performed as tests. He associated tests with time constraints which is not always the case in formal assessment. For example, systematic observation of students’ oral performance in a kind of formal assessment, but it is hardly called a test which is limited to specific time and gathers limited pieces of information (Brown, 2004). However, Harris and McCann (1994) used test as a synonym for formal assessment. Tests are taken in order to a) understand whether a student is ready to go to next level, b) know about problematic areas, c) figure out what the students have learnt, and d) compare the students. (Harris and McCann, 1994) What is problematic about tests or formal assessment is that they are considered as enemies to students’ competence for students are usually afraid that they will not perform successfully in tests (Cohen, 1996, as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001). Students and teachers are suspicious of tests, and mostly they cannot see any relationship between formal tests and teaching and learning progress (Brown, 2004). But if it is justified to both teachers and learners that tests are employed as complements to other forms of assessment (e.g. informal assessment), they can be appropriate means to objectively assess students’ knowledge (Harris and McCann, 1994). A fair and reliable decision of students’ performance and learning cannot be made by using the results of testing or formal assessment, rather it can be obtained by the help of informal and self assessment (Ibid). Informal assessment, based on Brown’s definition (2004), includes occasional and unplanned comments and feedbacks. The teacher does not design informal assessment before the class. Results of this kind of assessment are not recorded and no judgment is made based on them. According to Brown, informal assessment consists of various types of feedback; from simply saying “Nice job!” to giving some detailed comments about students’ performance (Brown, 2004). Informal assessment is merged with every second of teaching process as teachers are always giving feedback to students. So, informal assessment, according to Brown’s definition, is more about giving feedback rather than deciding upon students’ performance. However, Harris and McCann (1994) presented a different definition for informal assessment: Informal assessment is a way of collecting information about our students’ performance in normal classroom conditions. This is done without establishing test conditions such as in the case of formal assessment. Informal assessment is sometimes referred to as continuous assessment. (p. 5) Some phrases and words in this definition are of high importance. The first one is collecting information. The main aim of informal assessment is not collecting scores but rather gathering pieces of evidence about students’ knowledge. Another important word is performance. Students actually perform the task and the teacher judge their performance by direct observation. This performance is not done under pressure; the students are not as anxious as they are at the time of formal tests. The third important phrase is normal classroom condition. Unlike formal assessment, informal assessment is done without establishing time limit and formal tests’ rules. The last important word is continuous. Good teachers are always assessing their students. Formal tests are not the only reliable source for getting information, and additional data provided by day-to-day observation in a stress-free condition is needed to reach a reliable decision about students’ performance. It is essential to mention that, as Harris and McCann (1994) pointed out, unplanned and unsystematic informal assessment cannot be effective. Daily observation which is not systematic will result in a pile of useless information. Teachers should precisely define the abilities to be assessed, for it is impossible to assess students’ performance every session. In addition, rough impressions are not enough to reach a trustworthy decision, and student should be assessed based on a criteria. Finally, the relationship between informal assessment and other kinds of assessment should be clearly defined (Harris and McCann, 1994).

**SUMMATIVE VS. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

Summative assessment, as its name suggests, summarizes what the students learnt during a course and it is usually done at the end of the semester (Brown, 2004). This kind of assessment shows what objectives have been accomplished, but it lacks feedback or any suggestion to improve performance. Final exams or proficiency tests are examples of summative assessment (Ibid). Alderson (2005) associated summative assessment with long traditional tests which were so stressful to students. Any kinds of test which lacks further feedback and the only possible use of it is gathering scores in the eyes of students can be summative even if teachers have primarily designed the test to facilitate learning and teaching. On the other hand, formative assessment, as Lewy (1990) confirmed, does not have a precise definition. Formative assessment takes place during learning and is aimed to help learning and teaching by giving appropriate feedback (Lewy, 1990). Nitko (1993) named two purposes of formative assessment: (a) selecting or modifying learning procedures, and (b) choose the best remedies for improving weak points in learning and teaching. Gattullo (2000) characterized formative assessment as “(a) it is an ongoing multi-phase process that is carried out on a daily basis through teacher–pupil interaction, (b) it provides feedback for immediate action, and (c) it aims at modifying teaching activities in order to improve learning processes and results.” (p. 279). Most of classroom assessment is formative and students form their knowledge by analyzing and internalizing teachers’ comments (Brown, 2004). It seems that formative assessment has not always been the focus of attention in ESL/EFL studies. Before 2000 a number of studies were done about classroom assessment in regular school programs (Rogers, 1991; Wilson, 2000), but very few studies were conducted about this topic in EFL/ESL context (Cheng, Rogers, & Hu; 2004). Rea-Dickins and Gardner (2000) pointed to this neglect too and said that in compare to other topics in language testing, formative assessment had received less attention. However, it should be said that Bachman (1990) was one of the first scholars who discussed about the complexities and difficulties of formative assessment. He stated that types of feedback received by the students could affect the results of future formal tests. Bachman put more emphasis on was formal tests, and the construct of formative assessment were not discussed by him. In his later book with Palmer (1996), he focused on feedback and the relation between “formative evaluation” (p. 98) and formal tests. Shohamy (1995) was another scholar to take an initiatory step in discussion of formative assessment. He named some methods such as portfolios and projects which teachers used to put less reliance than on formal tests and to capture different aspects of language competence. However, the construct and practices of formative assessment in EFL/ESL context were roughly discussed before 2000 in spite the fact that its usefulness and help had been long been recognized by both teachers and researchers. Students should use the language in order to learn it, and if they are graded all the time, they do not have the opportunity to do so. They should receive feedback, analyze it, and have the chance to test their hypotheses based on the feedback received. This is the very basic requirement to learn a language (Brown, 2004; Harris and McCann, 1994). Summative formal assessment makes use of traditional paper-and-pencil tests and is just followed by scores without any further feedback. They are usually done at the end of a course which is so stressful for students and teachers. Lack of feedback results in lack of diagnostic information, and students do not clearly know about their weak points. But, students’ performance highly depends on appropriate feedback from the teacher which is the defining feature of formative assessment. Teachers can make use of formative assessment to prevent negative washback effect of formal testing; which is the separation of teaching and learning in the eyes of students.

**EXPLICIT VS. IMPLICIT ASSESSMENT**

As Bachman and Palmer (2010) mentioned, sometimes the distinction between teaching and assessing is not welldefined. In a classroom condition, a teacher teaches, conducts assessment, and decides based on the outcomes, and then s/he starts teaching based on the decisions made and assesses the students. Students are not aware that teacher is assessing them continuously, and the teacher may not call this procedure an assessment. Meanwhile, this kind of assessment can help learning and teaching. When the learners (and sometimes even the teacher!) are not aware of assessment, implicit assessment is taking place (Bachman and Palmer, 2010). Explicit assessment, nonetheless, occurs when teacher clearly announce the assessment (Ibid). The students and teacher both know that the process which is going on is an assessment. Explicit assessment can be either formative (in which the teacher is concerned about giving feedback) or summative (whether the objectives of the course have been satisfied or not).

**CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT**

Defining classroom assessment is difficult since all the aforementioned types of assessment can be done in the classroom. Teachers can conduct proficiency, placement, or even aptitude tests in the classrooms (Brown, 2004). Observation of students’ performance in the classroom can be graded or not; their interaction with teacher and students can be judged to rank them or not. Defining classroom assessment based on the means and decisions of assessment tasks. Using Bachman and Palmer’s (2010) terminology, one can say that classroom assessment can be either explicit (concerned about summative decisions) or implicit (focused on formative decisions). Figure 1 roughly presents the relationship between summative, formative, and classroom assessment.

**EFFECTS OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is more apparent in the form of summative testing in educational world rather than informal formative tasks. Students look for ways to be the “top student” through assessment and they rarely try to see a connection between

assessment and learning. However, Black and William’s extensive review of literature (1998) has changed the view towards assessment. Black and William (1998) reviewed more than 250 articles and books to examine the effect of formative assessment on students’ performance. They found that employing different methods to assess the student during the course would enhance students’ success. The works on formative assessment suggest that new methods to increase effective feedback will change classroom practices and bring adjustment in learning and teaching. Motivation and self-assessment are also encouraged in formative assessment (Black & William, 1998). Nevertheless, in spite of the clear benefits of formative assessment, techniques which enhance this type of assessment have usually been neglected because of practical problems in the classrooms. Marking problems (generous or unfocused), unrealistic practices, teacher-made tests which reflects standardized tests format, lack of negotiation among teachers about formative assessment, overemphasis on giving scores while useful feedback is neglected, normreferenced assessment in which low-achieving students start to believe they cannot learn, and lack of care about students’ performance in previous classes are just some problems mentioned in Black and William’s review. Furthermore, if pressure of various external tests is added, there will be no room for actual formative assessment in classroom routine! The problems mentioned in Black and William’s study make scholars to examine formative for-learning assessment in all educational areas. Although scholars such as Bachman (1990) and Shohamy (1998) highlighted the role of feedback in teaching and feedback, studies which aimed at formative assessment in EFL/ESL classes have been started since 2000. Rea-Dickins and Gardner (2000) are one of the first scholars who focused on features of formative assessment. They interviewed EAL (English as an Additional Language) teachers and observed their classes and found that decisions made based on students’ performance in classroom were important. These decisions, if made carelessly, could not show the true level of students’ language (Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000). They also questioned the reliability and validity of classroom assessment and mentioned that different procedures should be employed to assess these elements. In fact, “the validity of the inferences about the way in which the children use language seems to be equally important, whether the aim is assessment for learning, i.e., formative assessment or assessment for establishing levels of achievement, i.e., summative and evaluative” (Rea-Dickins and Gardner, p. 238, italics in original). Therefore, the construct of formative assessment and the skills teachers need to know in order to conduct this kind of assessment were first opened up for discussion. Gattullo (2000) conducted a case study in which he observed four teachers’ performance in applying formative assessment in their classes. He focused on children classes and reported the methods used. His study was a kind of survey in which the focus was just on children’s classes and the techniques used in other age groups were not considered. Assessment Reform Group (2001) and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2001) set some principles for classroom assessment practices which also influenced ESL/EFL world. They emphasized on continual nature of formative assessment and its integration with learning. Considering these principles, Leung and Mohan (2004) conducted a case study in EAL schools. Through observation of different classes, they concluded that teachers and students could decide on (rather than guess) further stages of learning and weak and strong points by the use of discussion, peer assessment, and formative techniques of assessment rather than standardized testing (Leung & Mohan, 2004). However, they mentioned that more investigation was needed about classroom assessment. Cheng, Rogers, and Hu (2004) conducted a study on classroom assessment in three language settings (Canada, Beijing, and Hong Kong). These researchers suggested that less is known about classroom assessment of EFL/ESL instructors. This issue would become more essential if large number of students, influence of formal testing, and central role of this kind of assessment in learning and teaching processes is considered (Cheng, Rogers, and Hu, 2004). In their survey, purposes, procedures, and methods of classroom assessment were investigated. Through purposive sampling, university teachers from three different language settings (English dominant, bilingual, and Mandarin-dominant) were chosen. Altogether 461 questionnaires were gathered, but 267 questionnaires were returned to the researchers. The findings showed some complexities of classroom assessment which vary within different settings. Factors such as nature of the courses, teaching experience of instructors, levels of students, and the role of external testing can also influence classroom assessment (Cheng et al., 2004). For instance, instructors in Hong Kong identified to have fewer assessment purposes and used less objective methods of scoring. Cheng et al. suggested that it could be explained by the fact that teachers in Hong Kong are more experienced than teachers in Canada and Beijing. In another study, Ke (2006) first identified language skills of 222 Chinese adult learners and proposed a model for formative task-based language assessment. This model is criterion-referenced, skill-integrated, and driven from classroom activities (Ke, 2006). Moreover, the researcher took into account curriculum objectives and task-based instruction in order to design the model. Wei (2010) conducted an action research and showed that formative assessment was significantly effective in promoting learners’ motivation and performance. He suggested some hints to improve the quality of formative assessment such as performing needs analysis and formulating assessment plan. In this research too, there was no indication of better techniques in performing formative assessment.

The Cycle of Formative Assessment involves several steps. Initially, the teacher and the class identify learning objectives according to set standards. Then, targeted instruction is carried out. After that, data on how successful the instruction was is gathered and analyzed, what is important, by both the instructor and the learners. Finally, learning strategies are modified in order to better correspond to the desired goal.

For example, the objective of a lesson is to raise students' awareness on the difference of use between Past Indefinite and Past Continuous. At the beginning of the lesson the teacher asks her students to complete a short quiz where the knowledge of form and use is checked. It is found out that students are not sure about the form, and the class decides they need to discuss the matter. After the discussion and clarification, a short practice activity is carried out. Now the class is ready to go on to study the difference in meaning.

Therefore, formative assessment makes the learning process more effective by adjusting it to learners' needs, providing feedback both for teachers and for students, enabling instructors and learners to identify learning gaps and to bridge them.

Other benefits of formative assessment for the learner are the following:

− increased motivation and effort, as students understand the assessment criteria and can apply it to their work;

− increased autonomy, as students are part of the learning process and feel responsible for their learning;

− students acquire such important skills as planning, goal-setting, self-evaluation, reflection;

− students become aware of their mistakes and are able to correct them.

Thus, we can conclude that formative assessment allows to make education more learner oriented.

Wiliam (Wiliam, 2011), having studied a large body of research on formative assessment, comes to the conclusion that “there is now a strong body of theoretical and empirical work that suggests that integrating assessment with instruction may well have unprecedented power to increase student engagement and to improve learning outcomes”. That is why formative assessment, or assessment for learning, is now introduced into education worldwide.

Formative assessment before actual teaching and learning helps identify the knowledge on the topic learners have when they step in the classroom, and scaffold learning accordingly. It is hardly possible to plan the route to the main objective and track the progress if the starting point is unknown. Moreover, according to cognitive linguistics, new material is better processed when previous knowledge has been activated.

Entrance Slips: when a topic is introduced, each student has a piece of paper, on which they write their associations with it, or answers to questions on the topic, or true/false statements. Then the slips are stuck to the board and the contents discussed. In case of associations, students can also work in groups to analyse them and create mind-maps on the topic. With true/false statements, students can exchange the paper slips, read out each other's statements and decide if their peers' suggestions are true or false.

Corners: The teacher posits a question, and there are possible answers to it in the corners of the room. Learners choose the answer they think correct, and in groups work to support their decision. Sorting: Learners sort a vocabulary list according to the criteria given (topic, part of speech, etc.)

Learning is a non-linear process, that is why monitoring is its essential part. Formative assessment enables instructors adjust the learning process to the leaning goals and students' need.

Wiliam (Wiliam, 2011) claims that teaching and assessment are interwoven, and often its difficult to distinguish one from the other.

Quick Pulse: At any moment of the lesson the teacher makes a pause to ask a conceptchecking question, that is a question aimed at checking understanding.

Voting: The teacher asks a yes/no question. The students vote for “yes” or “no” using cards of different colours or agreed movements.

Graphics: The learners use graphic organisers such as mind-maps, Vienne diagrammes, tables to illustrate the information they have learnt.

The advantages of formative assessment after learning are a chance to identify and mend learning gaps, an opportunity for reflection and development of thinking skills.

Short Quiz: A series of open-ended tasks, completed by students in the written form, aimed at checking understanding, immediate feedback on the part of the teacher or peers follows.

Ball Toss: The teacher throws a ball and asks a question. The student to catch the ball answers it and poses his. If unable to answer, the students passes the ball to another learner. This game-like activity allows the teacher identify the students who may need further instruction, and the learners, who have internalized the material enough to use it.

Grab Bag: Students write an appropriate question/ utterance for paraphrase/ definition on a slip of paper, and put it in a bag. One by one they take the slips out of the bag and do the task. The ones that caused difficulty are discussed.

The technique that can be used throughout a lesson is the Know-Want to Know-Learn table. At the start of an instructive period students fill in the first column of the table, writing what they know on the topic introduced. In the second column they write what they would like to learn, and in last one – the information they actually learned (at the end of the lesson). Then the class discusses how they can find the information that is missing and present it at the next lesson.

The technique that helps to keep students engaged during a lesson is Observation Diary. After every activity the teacher evaluates the effort and productivity of each student. At the end, the summative judgment is passed on each students' participation, which can be graded.

**MOTIVATING STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM**

The word "motivation" is typically defined as the forces that account for the arousal, selection, direction, and continuation of behaviour.

**A/ WHAT IS MOTIVATION?**

* The word "motivation" is typically defined as the forces that account for the arousal, selection, direction, and continuation of behaviour. Actually, it is often used to describe certain sorts of behaviour. A student who studies hard and tries for top grades may be described as being "highly motivated", while his/her friend may say that he is "finding it hard to get motivated". Such statements imply that motivation has a major influence on our behaviour.
* Motivation can be defined as a concept used to describe the factors within an individual which arouse, maintain and channel behaviour towards a goal. Another way to say this is that motivation is goal-directed behaviour.

**B/ Motivation in the ESL/EFL Classroom**

* Motivation has long been a major problem for most teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) or as a foreign language not only in the Arab World but also elsewhere.
* Motivation in the ESL/EFL classroom is easily one of the most important factors as I'm sure most teachers would agree with me. The main reason I'm coming to this point of view is that most of our students have low motivation to learn English. In addition to that, while most of them have a vague sense that whether "English will be useful for my future" or not, they don't have a clear idea of what that means, nor is that a very strong motivator; it's too vague and too far off.

* The first step in tackling the problem of motivation is that the teachers need to understand and appreciate the role and importance of motivation in any learning. In the context of second language learning, William Littlewood (1987: 53) observes:
* In second language learning as in every other field of human learning, motivation is the critical force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres. It is a complex phenomenon and includes many components: the individual’s drive, need for achievement and success, curiosity, desire for stimulation and new experience, and so on. These factors play a role in every kind of learning situation.
* “Student motivation is influenced by both internal and external factors that can start, sustain, intensify, or discourage behaviour” (Reeve, 1996).The teacher has to activate these motivational components in the students but that is the precise problem. How can it be done in every class everyday?

**C/ Ways of motivating students in the classroom** **1) - “Pair work” or “Group work”**

* One of the successful ways, if the teacher is resourceful and skilful enough, to motivate his/her students to participate in the lesson is to use “pair work” or “Group work” appropriately.Language is best learned through the close collaboration and communication among students. This type of collaboration results in benefits for all or both learners. In fact, learners can help each other while working on different types of tasks such as writing dialogues, interviews, drawing pictures and making comments about them, play roles, etc…
* Researches on Second Language Acquisition have shown that learners have differences in mastering skills. While one student is good in drawing, another can be good in expressing ideas verbally; a third other student can be good at role play and imitation. Besides, some students find it less stressful, if not much comfortable to learn certain rules or usages of language from their pears and comrades than from their teacher.Finally, communicative language teaching requires a sense of community and anenvironment of trust and mutual confidence which “pair work” or “Group work” can provide.

**2) The seating of the students**

* The way the students are seated in the classroom will often determine the dynamics of the lesson. Indeed, a simple change in the seating pattern can make an incredible difference to group coherence and student satisfaction, and I’ve seen many other cases where seating has been a crucial element in the success or failure of the lesson.The seating pattern you use may, in some cases, not be fully under your control – if for example the desks are fixed to the ground or the school has strict rules about not moving the furniture. Student numbers are also going to be an issue.
* I’ll talk about average size classes – anything from 6 to 25. Teachers have different preferences for seating arrangements – groups seated round small tables is often one choice. This is probably the best option for the larger classes in this range, but for smaller numbers and with adult or teenage students I think the horseshoe shape, which I find has all of the advantages of groups, and none of the disadvantages. A horseshoe may be desks in a U-shape with a hollow centre, students in a semicircle on chairs with arm-rests and no desks, or students seated around three sides of a large table, with the teacher at one end.nIn any case, whatever seating pattern you choose or is imposed on you, the class is likely to be more successful if you keep the following principles in mind:

 a) Try and maximise eye contact.

* Both teacher to student and student to student. In full class phases of the lesson, if the person who is speaking does not have eye contact with the others, then attention is likely to drop. This is the main reason I personally think the horseshoe shape to groups is better.

 b) Make sure students are seated at a comfortable distance from each other.

* Make sure you don’t have one student sitting alone or outside the groups. Besides, try to leave a fair empty, but not so much a space because large distances between the students will tend to lead to a “muted” atmosphere, low pace, and less active student participation in the lesson.

 c) Think in advance about how you will organise changing partners or changing groups.

* This is a stage of the lesson which can potentially descend into chaos if it’s not tightly controlled, with students wandering aimlessly around not knowing where to go or confidently moving to the wrong place.

**3) The Error Correction**

* It is always asked whether we should correct all students’ errors, whenever they occur. The reasonable answer is that if we stop at every single error and treat it with no room for errors to take place, this will lead to a gap of communication and students will be too much afraid of making mistakes. Hence, due to being too much obsessed with making errors, students will be too much reluctant to participate.Thus, Teachers should be aware of when to correct errors and how to do that without any hurt and humiliation. In a learner- centered classroom, it should be better to correct errors, which students make unconsciously, whenever there is a gap of communication or when not treating the error will result in a misunderstanding of the idea expressed.
* Concerning the ways of how to correct errors, there are several techniques which the teacher, who is seen as the monitor, should choose from them according to the type of the error and task where the incorrect form of language occurs. Among these ways of correction we can state: self correction, peer correction and teacher correction.

**4) Role play**

* This is another technique to vary the pace the lesson and to respond to the fundamental notion of variety in teaching. Teachers are advised to use the role- play activity in order to motivate their students and to help the less motivated learners take part in the lesson. Besides, certain tasks in the student’s book are followed by a role- play activity where it becomes a necessity to undergo such an activity. As good examples of that we can state: the hide (item) and guessing game, dramatizing an interview of customer and shop assistant, doctor and patient conversation, etc…

**5) Using realia, flash cards, Stories and songs in teaching**

* Realia and flash cards are considered as important tools in teaching especially a foreign language, since they play the role of a facilitator in teaching new vocabularies such as fruits, vegetables, clothes items, etc…Besides, they are very helpful in drawing especially beginners’ attention to follow and match new words to items. In addition, realia is an authentic material that helps the teacher to overcome classroom artificiality.Creating stories with the students is another way of developing speaking and writing skills. Actually, creating stories is grounded in the students’ ability to create a story from their personal experience. In creating stories some issues are revealed such as: a) fluency, b) whether the students have enough language to create the story, and c) accuracy.
* Teachers are able to demonstrate techniques of using songs in different ways to teach grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and community building because the students like songs and they motivate the students to learn the English language in an interesting way. Teachers can elicit students’ ideas about the song through activities such as prediction, mind maps, word splashes, etc. Students discuss questions such as the feelings in the song, what will happen next, etc. and write their responses in an interesting manner. Students may write and present how the song makes them feel and then draw a picture of their feelings while listening to the song. Teachers respond to this presentation and ask questions. Then, feedback is provided from the group.

**6) Using audio visual material: cassette player, video, computer…**

* Since our schools are equipped with various audio visual materials such as cassette recorders, videos, computers, projectors, magic boards and many others, teachers should use these materials when teaching. Indeed, they should include the appropriate material to use while planning their lessons. For instance, we should include a cassette player in a lesson based on listening, while we need to include a computer in any e-lesson or a lesson about designing a website or an internet page about your school. Whereas, we can use an overhead projector in presenting writing drafts for classroom correction or to read.

**7) Using the L1 in the EFL/ ESL classroom**

* Should we or shouldn’t we use the students’ first language (L1) in the classroom? This is one of the questions which most divides EFL/ESL teachers, whether they are for it or against it.The main argument against the use of the L1 in language teaching is that students will become dependent on it, and not even try to understand meaning from context and explanation, or express what they want to say within their limited command of the target language (L2).But there are other, historical reasons why the use of the students’ mother tongue went out of favour. Initially it was part of a reaction against the Grammar-Translation method, which had dominated late 19th and early 20th century teaching, and which saw language learning as a means towards intellectual development rather than as being for utilitarian, communicative purposes.
* But, we can say that there are a few cases when we can resort to the student’s mother tongue such as- When there is a gap of communication or total misunderstanding, since it can prevent time being wasted on fruitless explanations and instructions, when it could be better spent on language practice.- It can be used contrastively to point out problem areas of grammar. For example, various course books, like Headway, now encourage students to translate model sentences into their own language in order to compare and contrast the grammar.
* - It can be used with beginners, when students are trying to say something but having difficulty, they can say it in their own language and the teacher can reformulate it for them.- When students need to combine the two languages, for example in those lessons whose focus evolve around translation and interpreting.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Formative assessment is a powerful tool that can be used to develop learners' metacognitive skills. Besides, it allows teachers to bring variety in the classroom, engage and motivate learners, raise their autonomy and interest. However, there are rules that help to make the use of formative assessment more effective. Firstly, students need to practice formative assessment techniques regularly. Secondly, they have to be explained what the benefits are. Thirdly, students need to be given clear instructions. Lastly, immediate feedback is necessary.

There are many other formative assessment techniques that the author of the article is to try out

in her classroom. They are student portfolios, reflection diaries and blogs, case studies. Formative assessment is widely used for project work (see the Intel site (Intel Education. Оценивание проектов, 2012: электронный ресурс)). The use of technology for the purposes of formative assessment is also a promising perspective.

Formative assessment has long been recognized as one of the most influential methods to improve learning and teaching (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Shohamy, 1998; Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000; Davison, 2002; Cheng et al., 2004; Ke, 2006; Wei, 2011). Many tools of formative assessment have been introduced since then; such as journals, portfolios, surveys, oral interviews, and presentations. Classroom assessment, on the other hand, has potentials to be formative and for-learning. However, Black and William (1998) showed that practical problems in classrooms can hinder effective formative assessment to be conducted. Therefore, by considering the importance of formative assessment in ESL/EFL teaching and learning, the difficulties and complexities teachers face in applying formative assessment in their classes, and lack of studies on this area, scholars should also focus their attention to the problems of making classroom assessment as formative as possible and suggesting ways to improve classroom assessment.

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