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DESIGNING TASKS FOR ASSESSING SKILLS OF WRITING

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Testing has recently become one of the most burning issues that Ukrainian educational community keeps discussing. The objective of the presented abstract is to briefly comment on some of the key issues of designing tasks to assess skills of writing.

Overall, in order to be able to evaluate a writing assessment task, we need to know two basic things:

- the criteria that such a task must meet;
- how we can check whether it is a functioning task or not.

The two basic parts that can be distinguished in an assessment task are the *rubric* and the *prompt*. Although they have separate functions, in some tasks the rubric and the prompt are combined into one coherent mix of instructions and stimuli for the students, so their elements are intermingled.

The rubric can contain information on what exactly the task will assess; how students should go about completing the writing task (e.g. *Write the answer on the answer sheet*); the time given for the completion of the task; the word limit set for the task; how the task is marked. The function of the rubric is therefore to give procedural information.

A rubric must provide all the information that is necessary for the students to understand what they have to do. However, this is not to be interpreted as meaning the longer the rubric the better. A task intended for the assessment of writing ability must not turn into a major reading activity; therefore, the rubric should be as short as clarity allows. Furthermore, the rubric must be clearly worded to make sure that it is understandable. The language used may be student's mother tongue, but in modern European examinations the rubric is usually written in the same language as the student is tested on. Therefore, the rubric must be written in simple language and the information presented in it must be logically organized and ordered.

The exact nature and content of the script students are expected to compose are specified in the prompt. The prompt is the stimulus in response to which students write the script, so it must be understandable, rich, motivating and encouraging. The function of the prompt is to provide information about the context, content, and purpose of writing.

There are three basic prompt formats.

The base prompt is short and formulates the whole task in one or two sentences. Most one-sentence composition prompts are base prompts, e.g. "*Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that men make better managers than women? Why?*"

Such prompt sets the topic and may specify the main rhetorical mode of the expected script. However, it does not provide information about the writing context and the exact content to be developed.

The framed prompt, on the contrary, is longer and helps students to interpret the task by placing it into a richer context. It usually describes a situation from which candidates can understand who they are, why they are writing, what they are writing about, and who will read their texts, e.g. *"Your university is planning to start an English language magazine and has asked students to write articles with the title "Thoughts about my University". You have decided to write an article in which you describe what you like and dislike about your university and explain your reasons."*

The contexts described in such prompts present contexts familiar to test-takers or the ones they can imagine themselves in. They are therefore modelled on real-life situations and are much preferred by task designers since life is an exhaustible source of authentic situations in which writing occurs.

The last type of prompt is the text-based prompt, which may include one or more texts of varying length to which students respond (e.g. a letter, an advertisement, brochures), ideas which they are expected to incorporate into their scripts (e.g. notes prepared for an article, or list of ideas jotted down to be included in a letter), or visual information presented in the form of images (e.g. a graph presenting certain trends). Candidates attempting this task are provided with a situation in which they play a particular role and have a specific task to complete, and a text (e.g. the advertisement), in response to which they have to write their own script (e.g. the e-mail message).

СУЧАСНІ ПЕДАГОГІЧНІ ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ

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Сучасні педагогічні технології такі, як навчання у співпраці, проектна методика, використання нових інформаційних технологій, Інтернет - ресурсів допомагають реалізувати особово-орієнтований підхід у навчанні, забезпечують індивідуалізацію і диференціацію навчання з урахуванням здібностей дітей, їх рівня знань [5].

Проектна форма роботи є однією з актуальних технологій, що дозволяють учневі застосувати накопичення знань з предмету. Учні розширюють свій кругозір, кордони володіння мовою, отримуючи досвід від практичного його використання, вчать слухати іноземну мову і чути, розуміти один одного при захисті проектів. Діти працюють з довідковою літературою, словниками, комп'ютером, тим самим створюється можливість прямого контакту з автентичною мовою, чого не дає вивчення мови лише за допомогою підручника на уроці в класі [5].

Використання комп'ютерних технологій у викладанні англійської мови дозволяє відійти від традиційних форм навчання й підвищити індивідуалізацію навчальної діяльності учнів, оптимізувати засвоєння мовних структур та граматичних правил, а також подолати монотонність заняття при формуванні мовленнєвої та комунікативної компетенції учнів при навчанні англійської мови [2].

Використання таких інноваційних технологій, як подіумна дискусія, панельна дискусія, форум, колоквиум, круглий стіл, симпозиум, дебати, ток-шоу, інтерв'ювання, технологія акваріуму, "мозковий штурм", проектні технології, розробка портфолію, кейси, рольові ігри, презентації, технології моделювання