English Assessment

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Abstract— The research will be focusing on creating set of activities for ESL classroom. It shows some of the strategies , approaches and methods to create specific activities to meet the students' needs. It provides detailed data that was suggested to assess and evaluate the students' performance on each activity.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This is a portfolio of assessment activities designed to evaluate student's performance in an ESL class. The class is comprised of adults only, enrolled in an ESL class. It is a beginner's class where all of the participants are native Arabic speakers, some of them are true beginners and others can be considered false beginners due to some abilities acquired thanks to language exposure. The reasons why these students want to learn English vary: as a competency requirement at the job, seeking a job promotion, and preparing for future entrance at university.

The contents of this portfolio are based on unit number four from the book *Top Notch Fundamentals* by Pearson publisher. It is an A1 level book (according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages) and the main objectives of this unit are: "identify people in your family, describe your relatives, talk about your family" (Saslow and Archer 28).

The assessment follows a 2-week plan to cover all the contents of the unit. All four language skills will be evaluated, sometimes separately and in others in an integrated fashion. Extra focus is given to the speaking skill, since a communicative approach "stresses the importance of classroom atmosphere for the learning and practicing of communicative skills" (Taylor 69). As for grading, depending on the activity, some exercises have only one right answer and in those where there is an open answer, a rubric system was devised. The following is a brief review of the activities (see Table 1):

Table 1

Overview of Assessment Activities and Skills for Unit 4

Class Number	Activity	Skill(s)
1	Definition of family members	Writing
2	Bingo	Listening
3	Writing numbers	Writing
4-5	Family Introduction	Listening and speaking
6-7	Describing famous people	Speaking
8	Family of a famous person	Reading and writing
9-10	My family tree	Speaking

2 Definition of family members (writing prompts, multiple choices tests).

Objective: Students will identify the correct family connection and write sample definitions for family vocabulary.

Activity: Students will individually write a brief definition for each family member and also write the family member corresponding to the definition given. This is for both evaluating vocabulary meaning and writing skills.

Assessment: Participants will earn one point for a correct family member identified and properly written definition.

Directions: The teacher provides a list of five definitions for family members with a missing word and five names of family members. For each definition given by the teacher, the student must choose the correct answer to make the sentence correct. For each family member word given by the teacher, the student has to write a sample definition for it. The teacher should provide an example on how to write a definition: *Niece:* <u>She is the daughter of my brother/sister</u>

The teacher should indicate the students that in some cases there may be more than correct answer, as shown in the example, and they do not have to write all the possibilities, just one.

- Read each sentence below and choose the best answer. Circle the letter next to the answer you have chosen.
1. My grandson is the _____ of my son.
   a. daughter
   b. father
   c. son
2. My aunt is the _____ of my cousin.
   a. mother
   b. sister
   c. daughter
3. My husband is the _____ of my daughter.
   a. Grandson
   b. Son
   c. Father
4. My mother is the _____ of my grandmother.
   a. Aunt
   b. Daughter
   c. Granddaughter
5. My brothers are the _____ of my parents.
   a. Grandchildren

b. Children
c. Grandparents

- Write a definition using your own word to define the following family member.

6. Father: _____
7. Grandparents: _____
8. Cousin: _____
9. Uncle: _____
10. Niece: _____

Note that although not a part of the vocabulary contents in the book, words such as uncle, aunt, cousin, nephew and niece, are explained as part of the class.

If all answers are correct, students will get 10 points. If there is one misspelling mistake in questions 6 to 10, half a mark will be granted.

3 Bingo (info- gap)

Objective: Students will identify numbers from 21 to 100 according to what they listen.

Activity: Students will individually pay attention to the numbers the teacher say and compare it to a grid of numbers they have. They will circle the numbers if there is a match. The will continue to do this until one of the students say ´Bingo!´.

Assessment: There is a maximum of eight points to obtain. For each number who was incorrectly circled or missed, there will be a -1 point deduction.

Directions:

- Take a separate piece of paper from your notebooks, write your name on it and draw a grid of 3 rows and 9 columns, see an example drawn on the board. write numbers of your own choice in each column as follows: three numbers from 11 to 20 in the first column, 21 to 30 in the second, 31 to 40 for the third and so on, until you write three numbers from 91 to 100 in the eight column.

When students are ready, the teacher will ask them to pay attention to the numbers she is going to say out loud, and circle them if they have it in their grid. The teacher indicates that if a student has at least one number circled in each column, this participant must say 'Bingo!' to win the game.

The teacher calls a number, makes a pause of about two seconds, repeats it and writes it down for keeping track and verification at the end of the game. If no one says 'Bingo!' the activity continues.

Once a student calls 'Bingo!', the teacher verifies that all the numbers circled where indeed called. If so, the game is finished and if not, the game continues until someone wins.

When the game is over, the teacher will collect all the papers and check them for grading. Each student will be granted eight out of eight points if only called numbers where circled and did not miss to circle a called number. A point will be deducted for each number which was not called and numbers that were called but not circled..

4 Writing numbers

Objective: Students will write a list of provided numbers in letters.

Activity: Students will individually check a provided set of numbers and will write them in letters.

Assessment: Participants will earn a point for each number spelled correctly, for a maximum of ten points.

Directions: The teacher writes a set of numbers on the board, students will copy them and then write next to each number its transcription in letters. There should be 10 numbers in the set, one for each series, for example: 17, 23, 35, 40, 52, 66, 79, 84, 98, 101. The idea is that the first digit is present only once and also the second digit is not repeated, in a series of numbers from 21 to 101. Students should be given about three minutes to do this activity. Remind students to use the dash symbol when necessary.

* write next to each number its transcription in letters.

a. 17 _____	f. 66 _____
b. 23 _____	g. 79 _____
c. 35 _____	h. 84 _____
d. 40 _____	i. 98 _____
e. 52 _____	j. 101 _____

Once finished, the teacher will grade the writing, giving one point for each number correct and without spelling mistakes. A student can obtain up to ten points for this activity. A single spelling mistake, including the omission of a dash, will make the item worth zero points.

5 Family introduction (oral interviews, note taking, oral speaking)

Objective: Students will ask each other about family member relation, name and age and then introduce them to the rest of the class.

Activity: Each student will bring a picture or pictures of some family members, so that they work in pairs to find information about each other families, using who+be, what is his/her name, how old + be questions. At the end, each person will give an oral introduction of the classmate's family to the rest of the class using these structures: This is his/her… His/Her name is… He/She is …, in singular and plural.

Assessment: Participants will obtain a grade from 1 to 5 as follows:

1: Hesitation and pauses were predominant. Student could not introduce three of more family members. Mispronunciation, wrong grammar and vocabulary were frequent.

2: Hesitation and pauses occurred in about half of the speech. Student could not introduce two family members. Sometimes there were issues in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

3: Hesitation and pauses were present in less than half of the speech. One family member could not be introduced. Some grammar or vocabulary issues were persistent. Speech was understandable most of the time.

4: There were only one or two pauses during the speech. All family members were introduced. There were little mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. Speech was understandable most of the time.

5: Only one or no pauses were detected. All family members were introduced. A few to no mistakes were made in grammar and vocabulary use. Speech was almost or fully understandable.

Directions: The previous class, the teacher will ask the students to bring a picture or pictures, where at least five family members appear in total. The next class, the teacher will pair them to begin the activity.

In pairs, one student will show the pictures to the other. The student watching the pictures starts to ask questions: Who is/are he/she/they? What is/are his/her/their name(s)? How old is/are he/she/they? As the picture owner answers, the one listening takes notes on the family relations, names and ages, just writing the information and not full sentences. Then they switch roles. Each participant must talk about 5 family members and one of them has to be a plural (parents, children, brothers, etc.). They have 25 minutes for this part of the activity.

After each person has to show the pictures of the fellow classmate and introduce the family members to the rest of the class. Students can refer to their notes in case they forget the name or age of someone. For each person or group they introduce, the relationship, name and age must be said. It is fine if students want to say other things such as the occupation, but make sure all students have time to participate.

Student will be graded only for this introduction at the end of the activity. They will be graded as they speak.

6 Describing famous people (picture- cued talk)

Objective: Students will describe famous people and characters.

Activity: Students will individually say the description of a famous person from a picture provided by the teacher, using adjectives to describe height, body shape, age and beauty and quantifiers such as very and so.

Assessment: Students are expected to produce four sentences; one for describing each of the characteristic practiced in class, and they will worth one point each. The use of quantifiers is not mandatory but it is encouraged.

Directions: The teacher will show pictures of famous people and characters to the rest of the class. The people shown can be real, fictional characters or cartoons. The idea for famous people is that students are likely to know them and thus already have an opinion or it is easier to decide on which adjectives to use to describe them. Some of the characters should have exaggerated body features to promote the use of quanti-fiers and also make the activity fun.

The teacher shows an initial picture as an example. She says "His/Her name is… He/She is young/old, tall/short, thin/heavy/muscular, and very handsome/pretty/cute". Indicate the students they must use four adjectives to describe and can use quantifiers if needed.

Now teacher chooses the first picture for a participant, selects a student and asks ¨Who is he/she?" If the student does not know or remember the name, it is fine and we can ask a volunteer to provide it. Then, the teacher asks "How is he/she?" At this point the student must start with "He/She is…" and then use the respective adjectives. Teacher must be prepared to explain negatives, such as "not handsome" or other adjectives like "middle-aged". Also, guessing the age of the character can be introduced if it can encourage student engagement to the activity.

Teacher will grade the students as each of them end their participation.

7 Family of a famous person (process writing checklist, writing prompts)

Objective: Students will describe a famous people or character and his/her family.

Activity: Students will search and write individually about a famous person. This person must be described (age, occupation, nationality, physical description) and also there has to be a brief description of the family, using have/has (children, spouse, names).

Assessment: Participants will obtain a grade from 1 to 5 as follows:

1: Frequent and persistent mistakes in spelling and grammar. There is little to no logic sequence of ideas. About half of the required task elements are missing.

2: Many grammar and spelling mistakes are persistent. About half of the ideas have a logical sequence. There are two or three task elements that are not present.

3: There are some grammar and spelling inappropriate and one of them is persistent. Most of the ideas are arranged logically. One of the task elements is missing.

4: There were few grammar or spelling issues, but none of them was persistent. Almost or all the ideas had a logical order. All the task elements were attempted.

5: Very few to no grammar or spelling mistakes. Almost or all the ideas had a logical order. All the task elements were attempted.

Directions: In the same class when the "Describing a famous person" activity is done, the teacher will assign each student one of these characters (either the one they talked about or a different one), so that each of the participants searches the following information for this character, to be brought the next class:

- Use the following information below to describe a famous person form you own choice and then write a cohesive paragraph.

Name: _____   Age:_____

Occupation: _____   Nationality:

_____

Physical   appearance:

_____

Husband/Wife name: _____   Age:_____

          Occupation:_____

Children's name(s): _____

Parents' names: _____

     In the next class, they will first look and work with some writing examples provided in the course book and then, with all this information collected, they will write their own paragraph. The teacher must indicate that while they can refer to the textbook examples as reference, the idea is not just to copy the exact pattern from the book and just change the names and numbers. It has to look original.

     Student should be given about 15 minutes to write the paragraph. The teacher will grade the writing at the

8 My family tree (oral speaking)

Objective: Students will give a presentation where they will introduce and describe their family members.

Activity: Each student will bring a family tree to class, where they show names and pictures of their members and they will introduce them one by one, considering all the vocabulary and grammar structures studied in the unit: family vocabulary, numbers, have/has, adjectives, quantifiers. There should be between 8 and 10 family members. Students have to introduce at least six types of family members and one of them must be introduced as a group (parents, children, nephews, grandparents, etc.).

Assessment: Participants will obtain a grade from 1 to 5 as follows:

     1: Hesitation and pauses regarding look for vocabulary and grammar occurred quite often. Student failed to introduce two or more family members. Frequent pronunciation issues caused strain on the listener. Wrong use of grammar and vocabulary features were predominant.

     2: Hesitation and pauses happened sometimes. Student could not introduce one member of the family. There were some pronunciation issues that made those part of the speech unintelligible. Some grammar and vocabulary issues were present and persistent.

     3: Hesitation and pauses happened sometimes. All family member introductions were attempted, but some of the components were missing. Some mispronunciation happened but it did not affect the overall comprehension. There were some grammar and vocabulary mistakes, but none of those were persistent.

     4: Only a couple of times there were moments of flu-

ency concerns. All family members were introduced, with maybe only one or two missing elements during the whole presentation. Only a few pronunciation issues happened, but without causing strain to comprehension. Few vocabulary or grammar inappropriate but not of them persistent.

     5: Very few to no moments of hesitation or pause, and student self-corrected when happened. All family members were introduced, with maybe only one or two missing elements during the whole presentation. Very few to no issues in pronunciation. A few to no mistakes were made in grammar and vocabulary use.

Directions: With enough time in advance, the teacher inform the students that they will have to prepare and show a family tree. This tree must show the family names and pictures of the members. This diagram will be the support material of a speech they have to give.

     Explain that in the speech they have to describe eight members of the family and one of them must be done in plural form (children, grandparents, uncles, etc.). Also indicate what they have to say about each member: name, age, physical description, has/have children? Indicate that they have to try to use most of the language features they have learned during the unit.

     Additionally, recommend them to choose family members they are close to, so that memorizing does not become an issue (they will not be allowed to refer to notes during the speech, only to look at the family tree). Tell them that they can include extra information if they want to, such as occupation or nationality, as long as it does not interfere or causes overwork for the student. Moreover, tell them to rehearse at home.

     The day of the presentation, remind them that they will be speaking about people they know very well and they have practiced a lot during the previous classes, so there is no need to get nervous. This may be the first time they give a speech in front of the class, so the teacher should try to make the environment as encouraging and relaxed as possible.

     At the end of each performance, make sure the whole class gives an applause. Do not give immediate feedback after each presentation.

References

[1]   Saslow, Joan, and Allen Ascher. *Top Notch. Fundamentals*. 2nd ed. Chicago: Pearson Education ESL, 2011. Print.

[2]   Taylor, Barry. "Teaching ESL: Incorporating a Communicative, Student-Centered Component." *TESOL Quarterly 17.1* (2012): 69-88. Web. 22 Nov. 2015.