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FIVE PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT: PRACTICALITY, RELIABILITY, VALIDITY, WASHBACK, AND AUTHENTICITY

Submission Date: June 09, 2024, Accepted Date: June 14, 2024,

Published Date: June 19, 2024

Crossref doi: <https://doi.org/10.37547/ajsshr/Volume04Issue06-08>

Khusanova Mokhira Sherali qizi

Jizzakh branch of National University of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

Assessment is a crucial aspect of the educational process, influencing both teaching and learning. This article examines five fundamental principles of assessment: Practicality, Reliability, Validity, Washback, and Authenticity. These principles ensure that assessments are effective, fair, and beneficial for both students and educators. Integrating these principles can enhance the overall educational experience, promoting meaningful and lasting learning outcomes.

KEYWORDS

Assessment, practicality, reliability, validity, washback, authenticity, evaluations, test, supervision, skills, a face-to-face interview, student factors, assessment factors, administration factors.

INTRODUCTION

It is recognized that foreign language teachers must fulfill two roles during lessons: instruction and assessment. Science teachers express their views on students' abilities to pass tests or exams, the course content, and the effective progress of the teaching

process. Such elements depend on the teacher's judgment. Teachers focus on five principles to determine whether an assessment is effective, connected to the course content, useful, and authentic. These principles serve as the main criteria

for assessing the appropriateness of the type of assessment: practicality, reliability, validity, washback, and authenticity. Effectiveness relates to the pre-assessment process, encompassing the cost, time, and evaluation process involved in creating an assessment instrument.

The characteristic of a good assessment is its effectiveness. It should be teacher-friendly, allowing educators to create, monitor, and evaluate assessments over time using accessible resources.

To clarify and illustrate the first principle, practicality, consider the following examples. During the assessment process, the teacher must consider:

- 1) The funds spent on organizing the assessment;
- 2) The time required to create and check the assessment;
- 3) Monitoring the assessment process;
- 4) Tools used to evaluate assessment results.

If these factors are taken into account, the assessment will be effective; otherwise, it will be deemed ineffective. For example, conducting a face-to-face interview with each student to assess speaking skills in a group of 30 students is inefficient, as 29 students wait idly while one student is assessed. This highlights an ineffective use of time.

The second principle, reliability, requires the assessment to be consistent and dependable. According to Arthur Hughes, unreliability in assessment leads to imprecision. He states that an assessment is reliable if it ensures consistent results, meaning that a student submitting the same assessment at different times under different conditions should yield the same results. Hughes identifies two causes of test unreliability:

- 1) The nature of the test and its evaluation method, such as unclear instructions, ambiguous questions, and similar answers.
- 2) Different evaluations of the same test. Reliability is indicated by consistent results regardless of varying conditions or times. Brown describes reliability characteristics as:
 - 1) Consistent performance in different conditions;
 - 2) Clear directions in assessment;
 - 3) Clear criteria;
 - 4) Specific tasks.

To enhance reliability, the criteria for subjective assessments should be clearly and understandably written. Additionally, training should be provided to improve teachers' competence in accurate assessment. Understanding the factors causing

unreliability is essential: student factors, assessment factors, administration factors, and test factors.

Student-related factors affecting test reliability include illness, exam anxiety, bad days, and other physical and mental conditions. These factors negatively impact test results. The evaluator's reliability is another factor; human error and incorrect assessment can affect outcomes due to evaluator illiteracy, evaluation criteria shortcomings, neglect, and inexperience.

Administration reliability is also crucial. Poorly organized test processes can lead to unreliable results. Proper planning by the administration is essential for smooth test execution. For example, external noise during a listening comprehension test can hinder students' concentration, negatively affecting results.

Test reliability is another factor. Tests must be carefully constructed, with answers of equal difficulty and length, and a clear structure for numbers, meaning, and time distribution. A test should not have multiple correct answers or include questions on unstudied material, as this leads to unreliable results.

Validity, as classified by Brown and Abeywickrama, requires that a competency is valid if the test aims to assess a specific skill. Samuel Messick defines validity as an integral assessment of accuracy and appropriateness using evidence and theoretical foundations. Validity reflects the test taker's foreign language ability.

Authenticity refers to how closely tasks in a test resemble real-life language use conditions. Tasks should match real-life contexts as closely as possible. Test elements should have meaningful, relevant, and interesting contexts. Situations encountered in real life should be reflected in test tasks and integrated into test content. This approach helps students confidently use foreign languages in real-life situations and enhances logical thinking skills.

In summary, the purpose of supervision in the educational process is to increase education effectiveness, determine the level of foreign language skills and qualifications, identify and address difficulties and shortcomings, and boost students' motivation. The main goal of supervision is to develop students' self-assessment skills. To achieve these goals, the control process must be properly organized, conducted, and analyzed. Educators should align course objectives with control purposes, using effective methods and forms. Following assessment principles in creating control types ensures that tests are useful, valid, and contribute to positive student outcomes in learning foreign languages.

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