

USE RUBRIC IN TEACHING GEORGIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. *The article is dedicated to the usage of self-assessment and peer-assessments. Creating rubrics and displaying them in classroom settings makes foreign language learning not only active but effective as well. That's why designing language skills rubrics and introducing them to students maintains active learning as they (students) become mutual independent assessors of their knowledge and their mates' abilities. As well rubrics give opportunities to parents to control and actively be involved in their children's learning process.*

Key words: *rubrics, self-assessment peer-assessment, effective learning, independent learners, student needs*

Introduction

Students' assessment has always been problem at any institution, as parents are mostly interested in their children's final grades rather than their children's basic knowledge and they see the grades as the main indicator of their children's knowledge. They would rather focus on their desirable grades than deserved ones. If they see their children at work, their demand on high grades seems natural. However, they do not consider whether those grades are appropriate to their children's knowledge. We do not argue with them on this idea. The only challenge is the way how we manage to introduce fair assessment to our learners. That's way creating the rubrics according to each skill and posting them in classroom is essential at any level. As every student, as well as the parents, would know how they would be graded after each activity.

English is a compulsory language at public schools in Georgia. Students start English from the first grade. Students' readiness to cope with the challenge of adopting the foreign language at this age depends on teachers' proficiency. That's why teachers' professional development became essential at public schools in our country. Teachers, both novice and experienced, come across various practical problems dealing with the quality of teaching and learning. Lots of researches have been carried out to find out effective ways in foreign language teaching, but are all of them successful for learners? We all know very well, how difficult it is to involve students in activities, if they are not enjoyable, even if they are useful.

The effectiveness of teaching at public schools and university relies on teachers or professors ability to manage the learning process. Sharing the information and the experiences among the teachers, not only in one institution, but also in the whole sector is essential. If one institutional staff faces the problem, that problem may be characteristic of others as well. Experimenting and searching for different ways to improve teaching and raising students' motivation has been crucial for every educator. Different learning strategies are being introduced in contemporary education and it is teachers' and /or professors' job to cope with them and use them in their lessons. School departments (chairs) are working in every school and their aim is to have frequent presentations and discussions among the staff on new methods and techniques of

teaching. When other teachers of the same subject are attending different teachers' presentations, they might get some new interesting ideas for their lesson planning.

Setting of research. The purpose of our action research was to find out if the rubrics, created by the Foreign Language Department at school, would be effective in teaching / learning.

At the beginning of the 2018-19 years we, the teachers of the department of methodic of teaching and other cathedras of Akaki Tsereteli state university had a meeting. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the problems in assessing the students, discuss the types of assessment and work out a set of assessment rubrics.

First, we discussed the problems that teachers had while assessing their students. It turned out that one of the problems was how to assess our students' classroom involvement and assignment, since we use continuous assessment in order to assess our students' performance regularly throughout the course in two main categories: classroom work and homework. Another problem was the objectiveness of the assessment. The teachers had the feeling that their assessment was not completely objective (clear for students and parents) as if they lacked something to make it more objective and valid.

We discussed different types of assessment (formal and informal); more experienced teachers shared their practical experience with the other members of the department. We agreed that one of the ways of making our assessment more objective was to create the rubrics for assessment of different skills and other performances.

We took the National Curriculum and the standard of teaching foreign languages (Teachers of English Language-Standard of teaching English and correspondingly teachers of Russian Language –Russian Standard) as a basis of our rubrics. We looked through the objectives and the indicators and created the criterion for our rubrics. We designed the rubrics for all four skills, classroom involvement, group work, oral presentation, and etc. We designed the rubrics for four stages, for primary level, very young learners, grades 1-4, than for the learners of grades 5-6 separately because the teaching objectives are a little different at this level, basic level grades 7-9 and lastly the high level 10-12. What is more, we have introduced those rubrics to our students and before the lesson they know what they are expected to do and according to what they are assessed at the lesson.

We agreed that these rubrics were not unique and indispensable, that they were flexible and we would be able to change them according to the aim of the lesson. Also, we would be able to modify and change them and use them for formative (developmental) assessment as well as for pair and self assessment. However, we should point out that creating the rubrics facilitated our work and made the assessment more objective.

Method of research. The method used was action research, as it does not require a professional level of research skills and can be done (due to its informality) by any teacher. Action research may simply involve trying out practically the efficiency of this or that method and approximately assessing it according to students' involvement and comments. According to Ballard (2015, p 45), action research is liked by teachers, as it is

- Problem-focused;
- A solution-oriented investigation;
- Context-specific insider research;
- Future-oriented to some action or cycle of actions;
- A systematic, intentional inquiry that investigates professional practice to understand and improve work and;
- A tool for evidence-based practice

Why do we assess our students?

The main reasons for trying to assess our students are:

- Evaluating student' progress: for example, we may need to give them a grade showing how much they have improved since the last assessment

- Evaluating how well students have learned specific material during a course: for example, to assess how well they know a set of vocabulary items, a text or a grammatical feature.
- Evaluating students' strength and weaknesses ('diagnostic' assessment): so that the students themselves can be aware of what they need to learn, and so we can plan our teaching appropriately. There are some other benefits from assessment, such as learning some useful information about our successes or failures in our teaching and they may help us to predict how students will progress in the future ('prognostic' assessment).

Research procedure. An assessment chart for grade IV: At elementary level, in this case 4th grade, according to our National Curriculum, we use formative assessment, which usually includes giving oral evaluating comments during the period of learning and giving written feedback at the end of the year. However, our experience has shown that students' performance needs to be assessed regularly and students want and need to see their progress. Evaluative comments, such as 'Well done!' or 'Good job!' without actual grading, are easier but students and their parents want to see a grade as well. Therefore, at the beginning of the second term the teacher announced to her students that their performance would be assessed and explained on what basis the grades would be given and introduced an evaluation chart which she (teacher) posted on the wall.

To assess our students we used 'Criterion-referenced assessment' which means that the teacher judges the students according to some fixed criterion. This can be based on opinion of what it is reasonable or desirable to demand from students according to their age, level, needs or interests. (Ur. P 2012)

Thus, we created a table for assessment which includes ongoing work: whether a student has made an effort and progress, whether he/she has consistently completed homework assignments. Besides, as our students are the younger ones, we also included behavior as a component: whether or not the student has been punctual, attentive and cooperative.

How the grade can be expressed was the following question. Having considered our students' age, we have decided to use symbols such as smile faces, stars etc. They are of course less definitive than grades but the students, parents and others often consider them as definitive number-type grades.

As a result, not only student motivation and performance have increased, but also, their behavior has improved. Even the students who previously did not seem interested in completing tasks in class or doing homework have progressed. Of course, there is a reason and it is a fact of life: when we know that something is going to affect how we are assessed, then we are more likely to make an effort than if we know it is not. For example, if students know that completing homework affects their grade, they are more likely to do it.

Another way to assess students' performance is using projects. They develop students' creative and social skills; provide invaluable opportunities for correlating the subject matter and for transferring learning. They can be used at school at any level: primary, basic or higher. Furthermore, all above mentioned rubrics are really effective at any kind of institutions where learning /teaching takes place.

To assess a project, we have developed rubrics which include several features such as communication skills, contribution to discussion, group skills, attendance, etc. Besides, we use self-assessment and peer-assessment rubrics so that the students are able to evaluate both their own or peers' performance, using clear criteria and grading systems. Combined with teacher's assessment, it can be very helpful, as it encourages students to reflect on their own learning.

Conclusions

- Collaborative action research done by teachers of Georgian language is more effective than action research done by one teacher, as teachers can compare and share their experiences

- Rubrics can't be unique and they could be modified according to the necessity based on the objectives of the lesson and students' level
- Rubrics created for one subject board can be used in any other subject especially if they are displayed on the classroom walls, as everyone could see how they are assessed.

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რუბრიკის გამოყენება ქართულის, როგორც უცხო ენის, სწავლებისას

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აბსტრაქტი

სტატია ეძღვნება თვითშეფასებისა და თანატოლთა შეფასების გამოყენებას. რუბრიკების შექმნა და მათი სასწავლო გარემოში გამოყენება უცხო ენის შესწავლას არა მხოლოდ აქტიურს, არამედ ეფექტიანსაც ხდის. სწორედ ამიტომ, ენობრივი უნარების რუბრიკების შემუშავება და მათი სტუდენტებისთვის გაცნობა ხელს უწყობს აქტიურ სწავლებას, რადგან ისინი (სტუდენტები) საკუთარ ცოდნასა და თანაკლასელთა უნარებს დამოუკიდებლად აფასებენ. ასევე, რუბრიკები შესაძლებლობას აძლევს მშობლებს, აკონტროლონ და აქტიურად ჩაერთონ საკუთარი შვილების სწავლის პროცესში.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: რუბრიკები, თვითშეფასება, თანატოლთა შეფასება, ეფექტიანი სწავლება, დამოუკიდებელი მსწავლელები, სტუდენტთა საჭიროებები