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FLT 808
August 12, 2019
Assessment Design Report

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

To track students' progress and to make sure that they are learning what we want them to learn, we create assessments and evaluations because the primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010).

Tracking students' progress is paramount. Therefore, for my assessment design project, I chose a culminating unit tasks to evaluate students' knowledge, thinking, application, and communication skills. Moreover, the unit test will provide opportunities for students to communicate and interact in Arabic.

“Evaluation refers to the process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established performance standards and assigning a value to represent that quality. Evaluation accurately summarizes and communicates to parents, other teachers, employers, institutions of further education, and students themselves what students know and can do with respect to the overall curriculum expectations.”(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p15). Based on this principle, a total of four grades; one grade assigned to each section will be entered in the grade book and counted toward their four skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading.

This end of unit test is designed for the grade 11 students who are completing their third year of Arabic Studies at Appleby College, an independent school in Oakville, Ontario (the course code is: LYADU and it is targeting the advanced level of Arabic (Level 3).

This end of unit test offers learners a chance to adequately prepare by providing a thorough review of the unit materials prior to the test and by creating a washback checklist (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019) which I can refer to. Furthermore, assessments FOR and AS should be completed prior to the actual test to ensure two things; the students were actually reviewing the unit material on an ongoing basis, and teacher feedback was shared with each student. Formative assessments are used most of the time in my classroom for their importance. We read about their importance in this course and I also like to emphasize the importance of assessment by quoting Palomba and Banta: “Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development”.(Palomba & Banta, 1999, p50).

Because our learning objectives should be aligned with the curriculum expectations of the Ministry of Education, the instructions and assessments should then match what we are teaching in class and what the students should be seeing in their assessments and evaluations. In addition, we should ensure that the success criteria is also shared with the class and posted along with the learning objectives. Studies showed that students will be more motivated and engaged if we highlight for them what they “should know” (learning objectives) and what they are “able to do” (success criteria) at the end of each class, lesson or unit. However, summative test and evaluation focus on students’ achievement and proficiency progress with respect to essential learning targets at the end

of an instructional period. Therefore, I am using this instrument to evaluate my students' Arabic skills, and this is how I usually assess at the end of each unit.

OVERALL DESIGN:

I am targeting both micro and macroskills. The unit objectives that I am testing are:

- Developing vocabulary (daily routine, house chores and responsibilities etc..)
- Using reading-comprehension strategies
- Comprehending specific conventions of the various types of chores schedules and charts.
- Determining meaning and making inferences related to the unit theme.
- Applying language knowledge of certain grammar structures and forms related to the unit theme.
- To work and focus on the intercultural understanding and help students to demonstrate an awareness of aspects of culture in diverse communities where Arabic is spoken and comparing similarities and differences between Arabic and North American communities on the topic of house chores and daily routine (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016).

The success criteria of the unit inspired by the ACTFL Can Do statements:

I can name a few chores and share what I do around the house I can describe my daily routine and ask questions about the topic, I can read and scan daily routine and house chores schedules and charts, I can fill in my own chores schedule, I can apply the grammar and vocab of my unit with accuracy and communicate effectively to deliver my ideas clearly whether in writing or speaking.

Section I- Reading task: 50 minutes.

These 2 tasks emphasize meaning-focused objectives and they both imply more on macroskills than the microskills. In the first task, students are required to read a schedule for a working mom who is trying to plan her house chores. The schedule is presented in an authentic way. Then, they need to answer a series of multiple-choice items. They need to use their scanning strategies and process the information shared in the schedule and interpret it. Scanning requires an ability to understand the structure of these schedules type and the capacity of building a similar one, therefore practicing similar activities in the classroom prior to the end of unit test is necessary. “Converting such nonverbal input into comprehensible intake requires not only understanding of the graphic and verbal conventions of the medium but also a linguistic ability to interpret that information” (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019).

In the second task, students are required to read a passage on the same topic and use their local and global skills in order to answer the items correctly. There are short answers items that require inference and specific details (microskills) and the students must answer in a complete Arabic sentence (I can observe the sentence structure and comment formatively on their grammar and spelling skills without penalizing them (descriptive feedback will be shared with each student individually).

The second method of questions is true and false items with justifying the answers in English and explaining why the item is true or why it is false. More comprehension is needed here and more microskills are required. In both tasks, students should demonstrate an understanding of information in texts in the target language about aspects of culture in diverse communities where the target language is spoken.

Scoring for this section is a point system measurement. I made it out of 13 points.

Section II- Writing task: 60 minutes.

In this mode of writing, students are given 2 options to choose from. Both prompts are authentic, and relevant. I focused first on the purpose of writing and included the specifications. Then I shared the method of scoring with the student by attaching the rubric with the test prompts. Each criterion in the provided rubric is well described for each category. The objectives of eliciting some specific grammar and vocabulary are clear and included in the writing prompts and in the rubric. This way, students would be aware on what to include in their sentences. Students will have a 45 min to draft their composition, review it, edit it, then rewrite a good copy and submit both copies to me at the end. I have provided 2 integrated writing prompts to give more freedom to the student to select what they like, the topic is not new, it is tied well to the unit and students read many passages related to the topic.

Macroskills are targeted in this type of writing. Students will develop and use a few writing strategies and accurately use the vocab and grammar conventions that are related to the context and use paraphrase and synonyms. Students will use the stages of the writing process – including pre-writing, producing drafts, revising, editing, and publishing – to develop and organize content, clarify ideas and expression, correct errors, and present their written work in the target language effectively (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016).

Section III- Interactive Speaking and Listening task: 60 minutes.

In the real world, speaking skill is usually integrated in some combination of two or more skills. The kind of construct that was built for such task is a mix of micro and macroskills with more emphasize on the macroskills. In this interpersonal contextualized speaking task, students will be

paired, and each student will randomly select a scenario, and then interview each other's based on the scenario that they got. I have chosen the picture-cued stimulus and added prompts to each picture. All these scenarios are tied to the unit topics of house chores and daily routine. The interviews will be video recorded to give me more time to grade the students fairly without rushing and to help me observe their interaction, body language, gestures etc... Furthermore, I can increase the washback because I can meet with each student afterwards to share my feedback in a conversation with them and give them a next step direction for future oral tasks. The construct for this task guides the criteria that I have designed in the rubric that is also shared with the students. Of course, the objective of eliciting interactive discourse is clear and the requirements (grammar and vocab) are posted on the task sheet and in the rubric. This paired task is construct relevant and authentic. I will make sure to pair my students based on their proficiency level because an imbalance in proficiency levels can affect the students' performance. The grading will be done holistically. Instead of focusing on separate abilities in grammar, vocabulary etc., I will look at the overall discourse ability needed to accomplish the goals of the tasks that are highlighted for the students in the task instructions. I will look at the the overall communication and observe if the students were actually able to express themselves and interact at ease.

In conclusion, I made sure to use the triangulation method that Anne Davies (2011) spoke about in her book "Making classroom assessment work". Anne Davies emphasizes the importance of gathering and looking at all evidence to determine our students' progress. The evidence that she refers to is done through observing student performance, assessing student product, and following up through an individual conversation with each student. Looking at evidence from three different sources is essential because it puts every single piece of evidence into context. As a judge in a

court of law must examine all the evidence in light of the legal statutes, teachers must look at all evidence in light of the description of learning” .(Davies, 2011)

ADMINISTRATION:

I see the LYADU class 3 times a week. Each class is 60 minute long. The test should take 3 class periods). It won't be done in one day. In the first class the reading comprehension section will be given. The test papers will be collected at the end of the class. In the second class, the writing task will be given, and the writing draft and final copies will be collected at the end of the class. In the third class, the speaking and listening task will be completed and pairing the students will happen on the same day. All the test papers will be returned to students and a reflection will be completed. I will be administering the test and it is done in the classroom. It is a paper-based test.

References

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- Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2019). *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices* (Third Edition). Pearson Education.
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