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# ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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**Abstract**

This paper intended to explain and test assessment of students learning English language at the school Gymnasium "Xhavit Ahmeti", Gjilan. It was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both a theoretical and empirical research has been carried out. The sample constituted around 400 students, who answered an online-drafted and distributed questionnaire with 12 questions within. Despite students, also 6 EL teachers of the same school were involved, who answered 14 questions of an interview, and beyond, 6 classes were observed in a EL class hour per class. The questionnaire tested our four-hypothesis drafted related to assessment strategies used and continuous usage in the educational system. The interviews provided answers to our four research questions. Observations were to determine students' preferences expressed, somehow, indirectly. It was accomplished by doing a contrastive analysis between the Kosovo curriculum required assessment methodology, challenges, difficulties and the ongoing assessment process. This thesis' results revealed that students are very satisfied with the way teachers assess them. Students mentioned also a lot of assessment methods and strategies that teachers employ when assessing them. Similarly, teachers expressed that they do indeed employ various strategies when teaching English language. However, they also expressed their concerns, and difficulties and challenges they face every-day in this regard. Anyhow, this thesis was a great success indicating that teachers do a tireless work to know their students and to understand how they learn best.

Key words: Assessment, teaching, learning, curriculum, students, teachers.

## INTRODUCTION

As known, English as the language of business, tourism, science, media, movies, music, technology, and more, in other words as the nearly-globally recognized language, is not just a merely curriculum subject, but it is much greater. Its melodic pronunciation, somehow, generates satisfaction for students who love learning English language. This applies also to learners of other desired Macedonian languages.

As the advancement of technology is increasingly upgrading and as its original language is English, the English teachers are ought to be kept in step with these advancements, so that they would make education more lasting and more attractive. Today's teenagers are highly attracted to the world of films, music, and media in general, thus, getting them to make use of the latest, might indeed yield positive results in this respect. The use of technology is a phenomenon that in the world of today has become almost as necessary as food and clothing. It is true that English language is playing an outstanding role in society's empowerment. Teachers, in particular English language teachers, upon fulfilling their duty which is to teach, educate, assess, evaluate and also sometime entertain students, they may create new effective teaching, assessment and evaluation methods.

In Kosovo, there is a legal framework defining the evaluation of students' performance, to which teachers, education institutions/facilities must adhere. As known, the educational system and the assessment and everything related to it, are derived from the Core Curriculum of Kosovo. Moreover, the Core Curriculum of Kosovo obliges teachers/instructors to develop student-centred classroom, there is also the Administrative Instruction(MESTI, 2016, p. 7) No. 08/2016 on Pupils Assessment under the Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education of the Republic of Kosovo, entered into force on 26.05.2016, which describes also the assessment process according to which our educational system functions. According to this Administrative Instruction, "there are certain types of assessment, inter alia, continuous assessment, final assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment and other as well. All of these are carried out throughout the year and recorded in the personal register of the teacher, except for the final assessment which is graded based on arithmetic average of marks during

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the certain periods. Since in Kosovo, the assessment process is mainly directed to SA, there are two types of SA used to assess students. First, SA1 is conducted through various instruments (explained in the Table 1) in order to assess pupils/students with a grade in the classroom book. SA2 is conducted through an assessing instrument adapted to the specifications of field/subject so that there could be performed an objective assessment of pupils/students' achievements".

This is explained briefly in the following table:

| Assessment for a learning period is composed of two grades: SA1 + SA2 = 60% + 40% = 100% of the period | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Name and surname | Grade 1 – SA1 = 60% | | | | | | | | | | Grade 2 – SA2 – 40% | | | | Grade |
| | Homework | Oral assessment | Short essays | Test for short period of times (5-10 min) | Files | Project | Group work | Activity in class | Quizzes | | Grade 1 – SA1 | Summative test | Essay | Written exam | | Grade 2 – SA2 | Summative grade |
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*Table 1: Assessment methods in Kosovo*

According to Lorna (Earl, 2003, p.1)"there are many conceptualizations regarding the linkage between assessment and learning producing three notions of assessment: assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning, where it can be a complex process concerning assessing and getting the goals in class". These three notions play a vital role in supporting students' learning process. Therefore, assessment of learning pertains the notion of level reached to learn, whilst assessment for learning provides students with achievement targets prior to assessments, communicates assessment results with students by means of descriptive feedback, and guides teachers' future lesson planning, meanwhile assessment as learning equips students with abilities to set personal learning goals, monitor their own learning process, and conduct self-assessment in the course of learning. These three notions are applied within an English language classroom, sometimes even unconsciously by the part of the teacher.

"Teaching per se is art". A great teacher gets involved wholeheartedly in his/her job to perform his/her duties the best way possible. Traditionally, the perception of a great teacher originates from the background of high grades and great performance during studies in the respective field (Ang, How to be a good teacher?, May, 2011 p.p. 1118-1123). Indeed, the term "Great Teacher", besides covering high-level knowledge and skills, it covers also attitude towards students, the respect for the subject/field and the commitment to work, alongside with the ability to create a challenging and nurturing environment for students, i.e., he/she is ought to be open, approachable, caring, and above all, a motivation to students. An epithet most probably reached through the right form of assessment. Teachers as the chairs of knowledge and culture have both an exciting and challenging job, it is a noble

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profession, but except the qualification that a teacher should have, being a good teacher, he/she has to have communication as well as listening skills, finding the way of including in class activities all level of students, not communicating and doing exercises only with good students, being correct in students' evaluation. The best thing about teaching is that every teacher is different from the other, each of the teachers have their way of teaching, doing class activities, involving students in class, and sometimes that's the best thing because each of the students can learn in different forms, can learn different forms of communicating, giving their opinions, presenting their projects, etc. They play a crucial role in shaping the lives of young generation, i.e., their students. This can be achieved through motivating and encouraging new learners and through guiding them in having a positive impact in their universe. Among other things, a teacher's obligation is to meet the needs of each individual learner/student. This includes a safe and sound environment. As Brad Henry stated in a quote "a good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination and instil a love of learning" (www.Pinterest.com)

Special importance has been paid to the assessment system and grading practices, stimulating the implementation of different techniques for assessing academic performance, thusly drawing high attention on the importance of frequent and ongoing assessment during and after teaching and learning process.

Students will face many difficulties whilst learning a second/foreign language and based on this ground, teachers must know how to bring out the best in their students. Hence, teachers are ought to do so by imparting knowledge to students and supporting them on this educational sphere. Hereto, English teachers must not rely exclusively on one assessment method in order to be fully aware of the level of achievements and knowledge of their students. This because there is not an assessment method that suits all students (due to their diverse nature) and that measures their capacity level to possess the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and the language system per se at the same time.

According to my personal experience, teaching English language in the country I'm living in – Kosovo, became much easier over time, taking into account the widespread scope of listening and speaking opportunities and of course self-motivation of students to learn the aforementioned nearly-globally recognized language that is English language. However, the following question stems: Is the teaching process, as a whole, easy and fun for teachers? In my opinion, no, it is not. This because, in particular, with a class attended by a relatively large number of students and with far different level of their English-related knowledge and with heterogeneous background, is so hard to focus, pay attention closely, understand and meet the needs of students, and so on. Since in Kosovo there is a lack of training sessions for teachers regarding assessment of students' performance, most of teachers can judge personally not professionally, which derives from having a large number of students in a classroom with overwhelming diversity.

As we speak of assessment of students' learning process, it is worth mentioning that it can be a real satisfaction, contentment and pride but despite those, it can be also an absolute disappointment for teachers. As said above, a teacher has the main role in the personal and professional development of a student, hence, a feedback provided to the student on his/her learning process can increase and decrease the level of success as well as encourage and discourage willingness towards continuous learning. According to (Green & Emerson, A new framework for grading, 2007, p. 495-511)"Grading is one of the least liked, least understood and least considered aspects of teaching".

**Assessment**

There is a question popping out as to what is assessment and what do we benefit from it? This question has been being asked throughout the world by students/pupils, and even by teachers themselves. Immediately when the term "assessment" is made or heard, the first thing we think about is way of evaluation, it can refer to much wider varieties of methods that we can use in class during evaluation, no matter if it is a modern or traditional way of assessing the students it is a very important part of teaching and learning process. According to Halpern, "the three following concepts assessment, teaching, and learning" are inextricably connected since each informs the other" (Halpern, Adolescents

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and Young Adults, 1979, p. 518-523). As many researchers and scholars have struggled in finding an adequate definition of Assessment, they defined Assessment as the process of documenting, in measurable terms, the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs of the learner. A definition that many teachers and educational facilities rely upon.

*Assessment is at the heart of education: Teachers and parents use test scores to gauge a student's academic strengths and weaknesses, communities rely on these scores to judge the quality of their educational system, and state and federal lawmakers use these same metrics to determine whether public schools are up to scratch as pointed out by*(Edutopia).

According to (Kadriu, Metodat e Vleresimit, 2011), in Kosovo certain assessment methods/instruments are currently being applied, such as:

- **Individual tasks** – This instrument is applied in order to deepen the understanding of the (unit) teaching topic, to apply the knowledge gained or already possessed, to solve problems, to reasoning, to come to conclusions, to connect to renal life and to develop the teaching and learning skills. Characteristic of this method/instrument is the analysis of additional requirements in the student's book, various documentaries and in the creation of the concept map.

- **Individual projects** – This method of assessment involves the selection and use of evidence to identify, describe, analyse, and draw conclusions about a particular issue or problem. Students should be involved very often in a range of activities for a considerable amount of time in order to work individually. The teacher is required to plan the strategy of focusing on teaching skills.

- **Group projects** – This method/instrument helps in developing the individual responsibility, social interdependence and personal skills. Herewith, the form of organizing activities, identifying the roles of group members, and the manner of writing the product are determined.

- **Surveys** – They verify the acquisition of a unit or several teaching units, an interview is conducted and/or the documents are reviewed. Questionnaires or data tables are used to gather information.

- **Observation activities** – It is realized through the interview with each student or group, while the control list is based on the comments collected. Characteristic is the compilation and recording of comments on a separate page for each student.

- **Shows and exhibitions** – For the dissemination of information, it is best to organize and broadcast it. Feedback or even remarks should guide to reflection. For this, questionnaires for feedback are prepared.

- **Field visit** – Through this method, the evaluation is carried out as: outlining the project in the field, observing, drafting the orienting map, concept map is prepared, literature is used and studied, discussion is done after the visit and the visit report is prepared.

- **Verbal presentation -** Through this method/instrument, students present oral reports in front of the audience such as drama that has a good forum and has great opportunities for debate and discussion.

- **Listening** – Questions (requests) need to be carefully prepared; this develops a wide range of skills (communication, attitudes and values, and the ability to concentrate and listen), group collaboration, short summaries.

- **Open book** – It is very carefully planned and used to find the unit or topic, not the answer to the questions in the book.

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- **Practical work** – Necessary instructions and remarks are given in order to develop certain competencies. Equipment recognition level and conclusions drawn from measurements.

- **Creational activities** - A number of exercises need to be done to measure understanding of concepts, the level of competencies is displayed and individual and group work is done.

- **Tests and essays** – They are very motivating for some students and especially those who want to write, quickly and reliably evaluate the achievements of students, are easy to organize and difficult to correct. Great opportunity to involve students in reorganizing arguments facts and ideas to improve learning effectiveness. It is characterized by individual and group tests, with limited duration, as well as essays assessing a number of students' skills but with limited time and resource-based essays.

There are a variety of issues that must be taken into consideration when planning an assessment strategy. It is important to start by "understanding that assessment per se is a form of communication" as pointed out by (Siegler, Strategy Diversity and Cognitive Assessment, 1989, p. 15-20).

There are many forms of assessment, however the most used and well-recognized forms are Formative Assessment and Summative Assessment. Van de Walle (2006, pp. 13-14), who quoted "*If summative assessment can be described as a digital snapshot, formative assessment is like a streaming video. One is a picture of what a student knows that is captured in a single moment of time, and the other is a moving picture that demonstrates active student thinking and reasoning".* Besides having their different instruments employed, they also have common instruments which can be used in assessment, presented as follows:

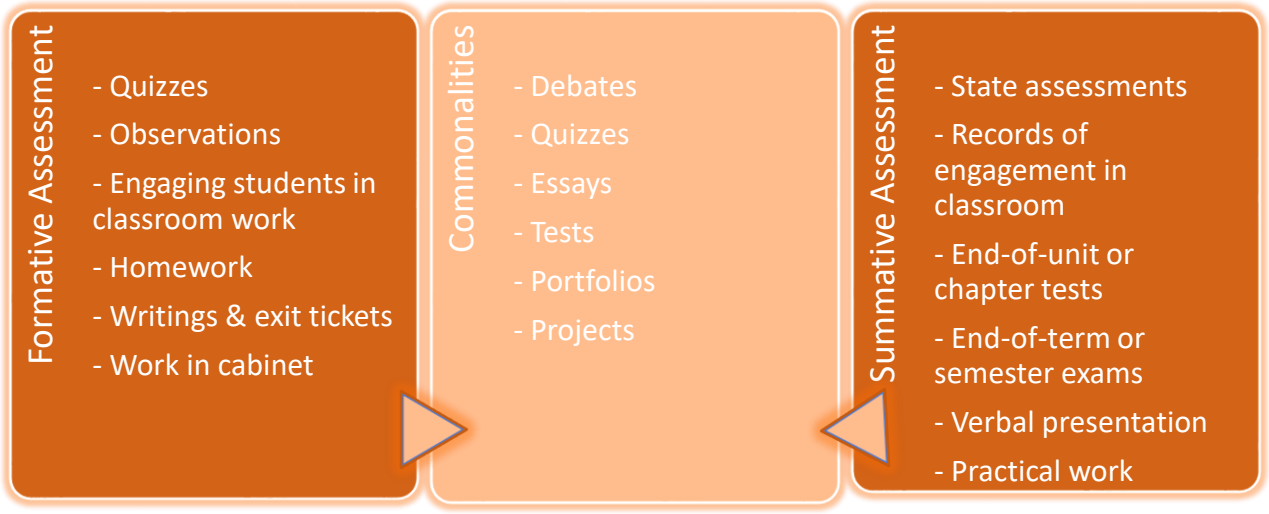



*Figure 1: Commonalities and differences between FA and SA*

It is really of interest mentioning that assessment tools themselves are not summative or formative but the purpose we use them determines how assessments are classified.

### 1.1.1. Formative Assessment

In a nutshell, this form of assessment includes tests and exams that evaluate how one is learning the material during the respective course. Assessment for learning is best described as "a process used by teachers to adjust their teaching strategies, and by students to adjust their learning strategies" as pointed out by (Hanley, 1994, p. 222-229). Formative assessment is more based on ongoing process of learning by the students in class, everyday activities are measured by this type of assessment.

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**Summative Assessment**

In a nutshell, this form of assessment is tests and exams that evaluate how much one has learned the material during the respective course. Education related ministries, departments, sectors, organizations, and institutions can use this form of assessment as a method to hold public schools accountable for providing quality education. Increasingly, "international SA methods, including the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), have been of great significance regarding the comparison of national education systems to actual developments in other countries" as it is mentioned by (Hopfenbeck, The use and abuse of assessment, 2019, p. 637-642). Anyhow, besides being helpful to students, this can be helpful to teachers as well, because it is a useful form of assessing, and its general purpose is based on the test or the exam that the students do at the end of the term.

**Objectives of the study**

Actually, assessment does not always mean assessing students' knowledge as it is most probably assumed as soon as we hear the term. There are a variety of issues that must be taken into consideration when planning assessment strategy. It is important to start with the understanding that assessment is a form of communication. This communication can be to a variety of sources, "to the students (feedback on their learning), to the lecturer (feedback on their teaching), to the curriculum designer (feedback on the curriculum)" according to (McAlpine, 2002, p. 883-891). The approach to which we do the assessment defines its role. It is worth mentioning that none of the above-mentioned roles is less or more important than the other since all together create a strong mainstay of a genuine educational system. There are lots of opinions towards the assessing process especially when it comes to children assessment, because they say that a lot of stress and panic can happen on children and it could cause a fear panic, but on the other hand the teacher, the parents and the children themselves could be able to know the learning progress, could know like what subject need more practice, and could be proud of themselves when they get good marks. Even for high school students could be useful for the same reasons, because even though they are grown enough still they like the idea of knowing their result, their lesson progress and it could be like a mirror of their learning process during the period or term.

Therefore, the major objectives of this study are:

- To present theoretically the issues on different assessment strategies,
- To identify factors that complicate the assessment procedure,
- To find out whether all assessment instruments are included while teaching,
- To see whether all the language skills are assessed properly.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

We were focused on the strategies more, but the language skills are of another level of importance and as such they are not an isolated process. The language skills we are referring to are: listening, reading, speaking and writing. These "language skills should be applied in a teaching hour, although they change from level to level, depending on the subject and objectives of the lecture" according to (Sadiku, The Importance of Four Skills Reading, Speaking, Writing, Listening in a Lesson Hour, 2015, p. 29-31). Teachers must set adequate standards for an ESL/EFL classroom. They should be committed to create adequate conditions for students so that they would reach to learn effectively and therefore achieve the desired outcome. Another very important fact considering the importance of language skills is that no matter if you are a student or a professional, everything we do we need the four language skills. If you are in class or if you are at work like writing a presentation or listening to your co-workers, reading any instructions and discuss about them. All of us are active listeners or active speakers in our everyday life, active readers or active writers, that's the reason why these four language skills are very important, even being in a shop or a bus, we need to read, listen, speak and write.

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**Listening**

This skill is the first skill used in order to master a language pronunciation. Due to physiology, one cannot pronounce a word without listening it first. Hence, teachers as ourselves should bear in mind the significance of the language input (listening) over the language output (speaking). This is the masterpiece behind the words "good listeners often speak more exactly and more creatively than poor listeners; they have more words at their command" as it is mentioned by (Smith, Creative teaching of the language arts in the elementary school, 1975, p.200-260). Furthermore, from our everyday life, we have experienced many situations where one can respond accurately only after listening precisely. "If opportunities for students to learn English language are vanishing little by little due to lack of listening, teachers must include radios and videos and also must speak in English all the time" (Mendelsohn, 1994, pp. 304-324).

**Speaking**

A very important activity in classes are also discussions, where everyone can discuss about things they like or are interested about, they can choose a topic and give their pros and cons, they can have conversation with each-other about the text that they read in the book, it is very important because this way they become fluent in English language. "Pronunciation of words can be distorted due to lack of courage to pronounce something incorrectly, and due to social pressure, thusly teachers shall work in that direction, they shall commit themselves to encourage students to speak no matter the outcome, as we can learn more by being wrong" as it is mentioned by (Gordon, Teaching Young Children a Second Language, 2007, p.195-208). People speak by communicating when they want to say something, and "want" implies the desire to speak, to convey a message. Another reason is that people simply do not want to keep silent, and therefore they communicate/speak, even the first thing that comes to their mind.

**Reading**

Reading enables learners to access information from many sources, to expand the sphere of knowledge, etc. Through reading, one's imagination "gets wider, and life colours gets lighter, reading develops the brain in so many different levels" according to (Cattinelli, Borghese, Galluci, & Paulesu, Reading the reading brain: A new meta-analysis of functional imaging data on reading, 2013, p. 214-238). Reading is a very important part of the class, because students can read, imagine the characters, getting new information through situations we read in class, improve their pronunciation while reading, etc.

**Writing**

This skill is rarely used from children to write what they say or listen. This is a very complex skill. Herein, a study by (Jenkins, Heliotis, Stein, & Haynes, Improving Reading Comprehension by Using Paragraph Restatements, 1987, p. 54-59) performed on students of three-six grades, who were taught to reformulate their "own words by using writing comprehension". However, building and possessing all the four language skills can help you in every field of life, can help you have success and progress in your studies or career, can help you be more punctual in your thoughts and clearer in your thoughts no matter you are at home, school, working place or in the street. Being good in speech is something that you could always have impact on the others and always make the mass listen to you.

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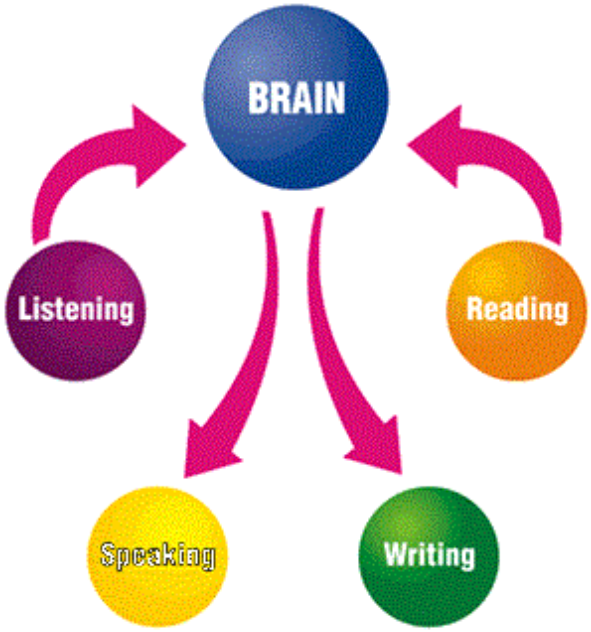



*Figure 2. Complete Communicator*

As assessment has a great importance for students\ achievements and their preparation for labour market, there are many studies conducted in this regard. Many countries are applying the aforementioned assessment methods, for example, in Vermont, researchers have conducted a study to know the extent students benefit from the assessment. A corporation named "RAND" took the responsibility of carrying out such a study, which concluded that the effect of assessment for lessons learned was substantial and positive. RAND surveyed half the teachers, who reported an enhancement of learning process when students worked in pairs or small groups. Around three-fourths of the principals were interviewed, who stated that the assessment program yielded positive changes in teaching at their schools. Another study has been conducted with third, sixth and eighth grade classrooms in Chicago, which revealed that when students were given writing and language assignments, whereby, calling for more authentic work, they performed better on tests used to judge their basic skills. These skills "pertain the creating of sentences, solving problems, organizing their knowledge and experience, testing their ideas with other students, and expressing themselves both orally and in writing" as it is mentioned by (Furger, Roberta, 2002 p. 5-9).

As many researchers have studied the grading system as a form of assessment and how it would infuse the events occurring in a classroom, as such, it needs to be acknowledged and managed when the teachers begin to plan a class. "Scholars have defined the term "assessment" as "the systematic collection of information about the process of learning, or programs of learning", which is used to build capacities regarding the learning process captured by students (Walvoord & Anderson, 2009, pp. 1-16)

In 1987, according to (Willing, Learning styles in adult migrant education, 1993, p. 50-146) who "has assessed the styles of learning by involving 517 adult ESL learners in Australia". Based on their responses to a questionnaire with 30 questions, he attempted to identify how differences in cognitive learning styles affected the preferences of learners in six different areas:

1. specific classroom activities;
2. special behaviour of teachers;
3. particular grouping agreements;
4. certain aspects of language that needs a kind of emphasis;
5. some sensory modes, such as visual, auditory, or tactile learning; and
6. particular modes of learning outside the classroom.

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This study has also found out that differences in cognitive styles affect the preferences of learners for learning styles. For instance, in the classroom many learners choose to learn by games, by working in pairs, to study grammar more, to receive a feedback by the teacher emphasizing one's mistakes, etc. Another study conducted (Reid, The learning style preferences of ESL students, 1987, pp. 87-111) emphasized four learning styles:

1. visual learning (reading and studying figures);
2. auditory learning (listening the lecture or audio tapes);
3. kinaesthetic learning (physical responses); and
4. tactile learning (hands-on learning).

According to the abovementioned studies, the process of assessment gets increasingly facilitated if followed upon. This brings us back to the section where the pre-assessment or diagnostic assessment form has been mentioned. Knowing students will ease the work for a teacher, complying with their learning preferences will make path to the use of best assessment strategies that suit adequately the students.

Nevertheless, assessment strategies can also create a path for students to cheat during a written exam/test. This is truthfulness, therefore, teachers and people in general admit that everybody lies at one time or another, and cheating in an exam is a common action in the education system. Bushweller (2000, p. 24-30) has conducted a research in this regard, and concluded that "70% of American high school seniors admit to cheating on at least one test, and 95% of the students have admitted that they have cheated but never caught doing so". According to Cizek (1999, p. 180-280), he has also reported that cheating during an exam/test marked a significant increase in the second half of the twentieth century, and upon technology advancement, cheating has gone far forward over the last decade. These studies have indicated that, many times, "traditional assessment strategies may turn into boring routine and thusly students are obliged from within themselves to overcome the "exam/test" obstacle to move forward with their lives", pointed out by (Heberling, Maintaining academic integrity in on-line education, 2002, p. 3). A funny thing is that in my school facility, when a student cheats in a test and/or other assessment forms, peers and/or other people, sometime, state that the concerned student is very capable that's why he/she could indeed cheat.

The following image describes wealthy the idea of assessment, and how easily teachers/instructors could be mistaken. Nevertheless, assessment and teaching walk altogether in a student-centred classroom. Teachers/instructors need to use a variety of "different strategies to assess students' willingness for a particular unit of study and to plan their instruction/lesson around the students' needs". Ongoing assessment of student learning is an important part of the planning process (Regier, 2012, pp. 1-20).

## Challenges and difficulties in the application of different assessment strategies in English language teaching

Assessment is considered as one of the most difficult and most critical part during teaching and learning process, you have to be careful and punctual while giving the feedback to your student, you have to correct and at the same time motivate the students to continue further, still it is very important to assess the performance because through the process of assessment we can provide feedback and come to the conclusion and find out to what extent the students are meeting the course objectives. Lately, have been encountered different forms of assessment and significant changes in assessing English language, "an emphasis that has been noticed and has been required is in measuring the quality of academic feature to the students" in order to have success in their academic studies. (L.Bailey & Wolf, pp. 1-9)

As one of the difficulties that a teacher might find through the assessment process is also the lack of teachers' training for language assessment, since there is not enough or perhaps any training about the assessment for a specific field of education, it is also important to mention the economic and social situation of the students. There are lots of challenges that not even students but also teachers face

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during the process of assessment, where the assessment has a great impact on effective educational assessment in classroom and for better learning outcome, and to achieve these goals it is very important for students and teachers to be aware that nothing has to be hidden during the feedback process, so that students face their real problems and can correct them easier and on time.

There are different forms of taking notes and assessing our students, but recently one of the most usable form is considered Portfolio, where we can take notes about our students during the whole semester on different activities in class or as homework, and on the other hand the student will have the opportunity to know the results of every activity. Even though, Portfolio has lots of advantages, it could be considered as time consuming in our country, since in our school every class has more than 30 students and one teacher teaches in 10 classes, and as a result it is much more difficult to work continuously on it. Assessment challenge would also be considered based on how teachers teach and how students learn, thus assessment practises are difficult to be changed, still if they remain unchanged emergent learning culture are in danger, because in order to succeed in class the teachers should find the best way to evaluate our students, we must know how do we have to assess our students, how much, based on what, etc. Assessment should be formative, should determine planning, should serve teaching, should serve learning, should be curriculum-driven, should be interactive, should be student-centred, should be diagnostic, should be exposed to learners, should be non-judgemental, should develop a mutual understanding, should involve reflective teaching.

"Assessment is not stressful only about the students, as it is considered as one of the most difficult and challenging part of the teachers' job, there are lots of difficulties that the teachers face with while they prepare and implement the performance tasks", that's why we should be focused also in the questions, like these mentioned by (Metin, 2013, p. 1664-1673)

1. "What are teachers' difficulties in preparation of performance tasks?"
2. "What are teachers' difficulties in implementation of performance tasks?"

According to Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice by (Metin, Teachers' difficulties in preparation and implementation of performance task, 2013, p. 1664-1673)it is presented that "most of the teachers have difficulties while preparing the performance tasks on choosing the right level of their questions, in determining appropriate subject for the students' level of knowledge, to determine about the appropriate assessment criteria for the specific subject or the way should the subject be evaluated on", a big number of students in classes has a great impact on these difficulties, or because teachers have to prepare a performance task, while having students of different knowledge level, also the reason that there are not many of assessment training about teachers has a great part on difficulties that teachers have to deal with their everyday duties in school.

Despite the fact that there is a lack of teachers' training, still there are lots of other reasons when we consider talking about challenges and difficulties in class. One of the main reasons that have to be considered is also a very big number of students in a class, in this case a teacher has to assess approximately 300 students, and obviously that this fact in a way disables the process of learning-teaching-assessing, the large number of students makes it sometimes impossible for even well-trained professors to apply various methods of formative assessment, and it is known that formative assessment even though has great opportunities and benefits, still it is very time consuming. Perhaps this is the reason why lots of teachers do not apply all of these formative assessment techniques (even though they found them effective), and in most of the cases at the end of every period they try to apply some of the summative assessment instruments to assess their students and also to argument their assessment.

Another challenge would also be not classifying students into classes on the basis of their knowledge, according to their English level knowledge, having students from Beginner to Advanced level in the same class, could be difficult for a teacher to find the best way on compiling the test, setting the criteria of assessing methods and instruments, using the proper methods of evaluating students orally or in written form, even choosing the best method while explaining the lessons in class or choosing an activity to work in groups. In our country the classes are with 30 to 35 students, and this is a big number to consider the learning hours we have per a week, where there are only two English classes in Gymnasium where I teach, and for two classes a week and having more than 30 students for a class is

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not that teachers have the possibility to assess the students in a proper way, like have not enough time during test, not enough time for a student to give their opinion in class because of a big number of students in class not everybody has the chance to express their opinion or to have the possibility to be asked for the second time, if he/she is not satisfied with the mark.

It should also be considered the economical and sociological aspects that can influence and make it more difficult for the teacher to apply methods and criteria in the adequate way in class. Even borrowing books from each other or from other classes by students seems like a challenge or difficulty to me as a teacher, because in most of the cases the books are completed by other students from other classes, and in this case, I find it very difficult to apply formative assessment during the classes. There are lots of students that do not have their personal books because of their family economic status, or they don't have laptops in order to finish the project. Being in bad economic status it also affects in their social and psychological status, in their mood of learning in class, in their concentration during class lectures or sometimes even have misunderstanding during discussions in class with their classmates.

Sometimes we have difficulties also in terms of social and psychological aspects, since even though there are psychologist in school, there are cases when we as teachers have to face with the students' problems and try to help them. There are also challenges concerning the students' mentality, as not all the students come from the same level of educated parents or from the same mentality in their families. Teachers from the rural places have much more difficulties in this aspect because psychological and social experts do not go and visit them, their parents are more close-minded, students with special needs do not have the possibility to learn in special classes, or sometimes teachers have to face even with situations when parents do not admit that their children have disabilities or have special needs, and expect from the teachers to assess them with high grades.

**Difference and correlation between traditional and modern methods**

In contemporary education discourse, a notable dichotomy exists between traditional and modern pedagogical paradigms. Traditional education typically emphasizes rote memorization, while modern educational methodologies prioritize critical thinking and creative problem-solving. Bringing this division is the value-based approach, which amalgamates the virtues of both traditions, fostering individuals capable of navigating a dynamic landscape while adhering to ethical principles.

According to curriculum difference, a crucial distinction between the traditional and modern perspectives on curriculum lies in their conceptualization thereof. The traditional viewpoint perceives the curriculum as a rigid framework of predetermined subjects arranged in a linear sequence. In contrast, the modern outlook regards the curriculum as comprising all intentional learning experiences, both within and beyond the confines of the classroom, with a focus on holistic development.

Assessment methodologies further outline the differences between traditional and contemporary educational models. Traditional assessments typically manifest as standardized exams featuring selected-response items like multiple-choice or true/false questions. Conversely, modern pedagogies advocate for authentic assessment strategies, wherein students are tasked with utilizing acquired knowledge to generate tangible outcomes or engage in practical demonstrations of mastery. (Principles and Methods of Assessment, July, 18, 2015)

**Testing in English Language instruction**

As mentioned by Saragih (Saragih, 2016, p.75), "testing continues to be the most used tool by teachers to assess their students in English Language. Testing is a method of measuring students' abilities, knowledge or performance in a given domain. Test questions should be structured and explicit. The test format commonly used by teachers is:

1. Tests with multiple choice questions
2. A writing prompt with a scoring rubric
3. An oral testing based on a question script and a checklist of expected responses to be given by the student".

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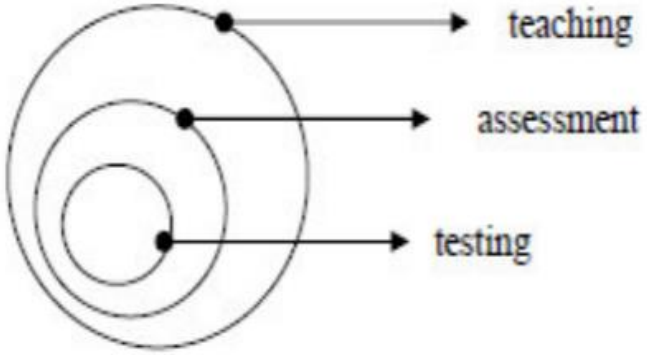



*Figure 3. Testing and assessment as subsets of teaching*

## METHODOLOGY

This study was born in mind due to many difficulties, as an EFL teacher, encountered many years in this regard. First, the concept was thought, the idea was discussed and the theory was searched. This topic, as seen, is of great concern yet very pleasurable to deep into. This because many EFL teachers are concerned on this matter and this demonstrates, the effort, the great commitment, and the confidence teachers have in perfectly doing their jobs.

## CONCLUSIONS

Communication is a key concept to be learning and practicing throughout life. People have many different ways to discharge this function. Some of them communicate by gestures, eyes, words, using letters, and even silence is a form of communication. As known, people learn the basics from the elementary education, then they go higher to the secondary education and so on. Teachers of foreign languages have been struggling with finding best suitable methods to teach a new language to students, having their accent be very proximate to the natives of that concerned language. Since grading, assessment, and evaluation are the ground basis for motivation and capacity building of students, it was a very great need to conduct a topic pertaining only the assessment methods/strategies to boost students' motivation and interest in learning a foreign language, in this case, English language. Thusly, this research was conducted to evaluate the assessment strategies of great significance to the education system, in particular in terms of EFL teaching. It tended to measure the preferences for and actual assessment methods/strategies used by teachers, and how effective were they in evaluating students' learning process and their achievements in this regard. Measuring many methods including the participation-based and attendance-based assessment followed with grading, whether low or high marks.

The literature on students' assessment methods/strategies in secondary education is progressing, yet very variable in type and quality and also scattered and fragmentary in nature. Many reports are case studies from subject specialists. Studies of higher methodological quality are very varied in the type and organization of assessment methodologies researches that a best evidence synthesis is still in the future. However, the current research does identify pertinent commonalities and differences to encourage further advancement of assessment methods/strategies to the benefit of both teachers and students simultaneously. Hence, many studies have shown various assessment strategies and methods useful in this regard, however there are also many obstacles to assessing students fairly and adequately!

## FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Regardless of our results, future improvements shall take place. Competent authorities need to divide the number of students and form a classroom with very much less number than the actual number. In addition, the classrooms should not be divided by the index but by the level of knowledge in English language. This could help us, as teachers, and students in finding a better solution to teach/learn effectively and efficiently and also to motivate and be motivated by proper and fair grades or, if grading process ceases to exist, proper and fair assessment whatsoever.

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There is room for improvements in all life areas, including personal and professional spheres. The life sphere is filled with many challenges. From birth to death, we never stop learning and changing, implying since little kids we start receiving information of every kind, and creating ideas in that respect. Hence, the human personality starts being formed and having many changes especially at the stage of puberty where, indeed one creates a scheme for himself/herself and his/her role. Teachers therefore play an extremely important role in this regard. Thus, other studies need to be conducted to produce results regarding the improvement of assessment and regarding the capacity building of students for much effective learning at an early age, especially when it comes to learning a new language.

Besides reducing the number of students in a classroom, it is also necessary to extend a class hour, from 40 minutes as it is now, to longer minutes such as 60 minutes in order for the teaching hour to be as effective as possible. Our educational system has many limitations in this regard. Moreover, there is a lack of sufficient training sessions delivered to teachers regarding to the assessment methods/strategies. It should be worked more in this regard. Our cadre is very skilled despite the lack of the aforementioned actions; however, they need to be more advanced to the benefit of both parties, i.e., students and teacher themselves.

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