

Alternate assessments w9 esol

[Education](#)



The practice of alternative assessments has been introduced in many ESL rooms across the country to make the process of assessment more efficient for the teachers as well as the ESL students. As an educator, I have observed different types of alternate assessments being used in such classrooms.

Alternative assessment refers to the methods and techniques for assessing students who have limited English proficiency. Such assessments are prepared in such a manner that they can be used within the perspective of the curriculum and can be effortlessly integrated into the daily activities of school or classroom. In this paper, we shall discuss alternative assessments like portfolios and K-W-L charts that are being frequently used and have gained tremendous success in the ESL classrooms.

Learner Portfolios are one of the most common alternative assessments that are being used widely in the ESL classrooms nowadays. A portfolio refers to a compilation of a student's work which can include such items as notes from learner/teachers discussions, learner's writing samples, reports on books read, learner's reflection on their development, and statistics from performance based appraisals, and scores of commercial tests. Portfolios are a holistic, student centered and performance based approach of assessment. This method of assessment is tremendously beneficial to all the students especially the ESL students since portfolios focus on students' strengths rather than their weaknesses. Moreover, it provides room to the ESL students to display more than what they are tested for. In this way, students are encouraged to work more efficiently and display their best work. They provide prospects for students to look upon who they are as learners, writers and people. In addition, portfolios enhance the communication between the teacher and the students, the teacher and the parents, and the school

administrators as well. However, these portfolios are very time consuming and don't give quantifying outcomes which only commercially available tests can provide. Moreover, these alternative assessments may not meet eligibility necessities in career training programs, or higher level classes of ESL learners. Therefore, it is important for ESL programs to use a combination of commercial based and performance based assessments to test the language proficiency of ESL learners (Burt & Keenan, 1995).

As far as native English speaking students in the classroom are concerned, portfolios are fair to them. All the students, irrespective of being ESL or not, are benefitted from this kind of assessment since they are judged on the best performances that they have given in the class rather than their worst ones. However, to be equally fair to ESL and non ESL students, portfolios should be well planned and follow a systematic pattern such as the CRADLE method propagated by Gotlieb, or the Portfolio Assessment Method of Moya and O'Malley and so on. A well structured portfolio will always ensure equity in assessing students of all categories whether they are ESL or Native English Speakers (NES). However, if portfolios are not well planned, they may create a gap between the scoring levels of ESL and the NES (Trudell, 2004).

Another form of alternative assessment that is being successfully used in ESL classrooms is the K-W-L charts – what I know, what I want to know and what I have learned. Tutors are using these charts to commence and conclude a unit of study, mainly in social studies and sciences. Such charts are used for all the learners irrespective of being ESL or not. The ESL students are allowed to fill the charts in their first language or illustrations because of their limited English ability. Such charts help students to remain alert and engrossed during the unit and give them a sense of achievement when they

complete the L column following the unit and apprehend that they have learned something. These charts ensure equal and fair assessment of all the students whether they are ESL or NES (Tannenbaum, 1996).

Thus, we can conclude that the use of proper alternative assessments in ESL classrooms is not only beneficiary to the ESL students but also to students who NES. Moreover, a well planned alternative assessment ensures equity amongst all the learners irrespective of being ESL or native English speakers.

Opinion on weekly readings

A person's ability to commune efficiently in the language of commerce and society is critical to the integration of language-minority individuals and families. It is the duty and responsibility of every ESL instructor to help their students achieve maximum English proficiency. Teaching English to speakers of other languages is perhaps the most composite of all teaching tasks. After going through this week's readings it can be concluded the method of teachings of ESL programs are completely fair to the ESL learners. Ms. Holly ensures maximum improvement of English language skills of every student in her classroom. She uses integrated practice and teaching methods to enhance the English proficiency of the ESL learners. By teaching them the basic language structure, the technique of oral communication, and effective reading and creative writing skills she not only helps the ESL learners but also the native English speakers to improvise their English spellings, grammar, vocabulary and communication skills. The question and answer session introduced by Ms. Holly in the latter half of the class further boosts the confidence level of the students. The techniques and methods used by the tutor brought a significant transformation in the English speaking

capability of the ESL students. Moreover, every student whether intelligent or weak, shy or extrovert was equally taken care of. Thus, we can conclude that if the ESL programs are well planned and integrated, it ensures complete fairness to all the students.

References

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