

ABSTRACT

Methods of assessment are a very important part of teaching methods. They motivate (or dishearten) students to learn, permit them to learn from their own and their friends' mistakes, help teachers bring up students, make decisions concerning students' placement and transfer from form to form, improve their own teaching and carry out research, etc. Oral and written exams that were used for this purpose for many centuries caused much dissatisfaction of students as being unfair. Teachers, administrations and researchers could not get adequate information either. Objective testing introduced in the beginning of the XX century helped to remove this problem, but turned out to be too mechanical, reproductive, non-communicative, not reflecting the requirements of real life, etc. This is why since the 1980s educational science has been looking for alternative (authentic/ performance and portfolio) - more adequate - methods of assessment.

This thesis compares different kinds of assessments and deals first of all with authentic assessment and one of its kinds - portfolio assessment. Authentic learning (including assessment) must be personally relevant and connected to the real world. An educational portfolio (similarly to painter's, actor's, etc. portfolio) is a collection of evidence (student's essays, posters, exercises made up and/or fulfilled by the student that is selected by the student (probably on teacher's advice) to show students' learning outcomes to demonstrate their abilities.

In the thesis I did my best to view portfolio objectively, with all its advantages and disadvantages. Portfolio assessment, a process in which teaching and assessment activities are integrated and where there is student involvement and reflection, is the most popular today alternative assessment type. Portfolio, which provides richer, more authentic and valid assessment of student performance, enables us to have formative assessment rather than summative and to motivate students. However, it is time-consuming, difficult to assess and requires from the teacher to have special skills. This is why I believe in the necessity of combination of traditional assessment with portfolio, emphasizing on the advantages of both.

As I would like to contribute to effective introduction of portfolio assessment in Georgia, in order to obtain information about awareness of English teachers, parents of students and school administrations in Georgia on portfolio assessment. I held questionnaires. The purpose of administering the questionnaire survey was to find out whether portfolio assessment was used by the aforesaid people and how it was used, as well as what their

attitudes toward portfolio assessment are. It showed that much still has to be done in this direction.

The goal of the educational experiment (quantitative research) held by me was to check my hypothesis that a combination of traditional assessment with portfolio can really have a positive impact on teaching English (at high school, on upper intermediate level). The experiment showed that a combination of traditional and portfolio assessment yields higher motivation and, correspondingly, higher level of language skills than purely traditional assessment.