



Оценивание качества профессиональной подготовки будущих преподавателей иностранного языка

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Аннотация. В статье освещаются некоторые вопросы подготовки будущих преподавателей иностранного языка, связанные с организацией процесса контроля и оценки качества методической подготовки будущих и начинающих преподавателей. В статье обосновывается использование различных приемов, способствующих аутентичности оценивания профессионально методических умений преподавателей иностранного языка в ходе их профессиональной подготовки или переподготовки. Статья предлагает образцы профессионально ориентированных контрольных заданий, которые могут способствовать повышению качества методической подготовки будущих преподавателей иностранного языка.

Ключевые слова: методическая подготовка будущих преподавателей иностранного языка, повышение квалификации преподавателей, оценивание методической подготовки преподавателей иностранного языка

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Original article

Teacher Evaluation as Part of Teacher Training and Teacher Development

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Abstract. The purpose of the article is to explore teacher-training and teacher development issues related to the evaluation of future foreign language teachers' and in-service foreign language teachers' professional competence. The author suggests using a variety of techniques to make teacher evaluation as authentic as possible. The author describes samples of testing activities and tasks which could be used in the teacher-training course with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of foreign language teacher development.

Keywords: foreign language teacher training, foreign language teacher development, foreign language teacher evaluation

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INTRODUCTION

It's common knowledge that teacher-training and teacher development are not only about developing and improving teaching skills. An important part of any training or development course is teacher evaluation used to "gather information about how and how well a teacher teaches. Teacher evaluation is based on observation, learner evaluation, student results, interviews, portfolios, etc." [Longman Dictionary, 2002].

What is important to emphasise is that we should try and test not only our teacher-trainees' knowledge of theory, but their ability of applying theory to practice, in particular to adapt textbook material for teaching purposes, taking into account students' linguistic and personal needs, as well as their learning styles, to use appropriately a variety of techniques, to use clear and effective presentation skills, to design effective lesson plans, etc. [Brown, 2007].

TEACHER ACTIVITIES FOR EVALUATING TEACHER-TRAINEES' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

When we assess our students' level of professional competence, the examination tasks should include practice-oriented tasks, apart from theory-based questions in order to make teacher evaluation as authentic as possible.

Practice-oriented tasks suggest that the teacher-trainee should act as a real teacher and organize a section of a lesson.

E. g. Act as a teacher. Analyze the following text in terms of its readability, suitability and exploitability. Think of a few exercises and activities that can be set up on the basis of the text.

What the task evaluates is the students' awareness of the problems that the text may cause from the point of view of its linguistic complexity (readability of the text), as well as the teacher's ability to assess the individual or professional interest of the text for the target audience and age group (suitability of the text), and assess its teaching value, i. e. the skills that can be developed with the help of the text (exploitability of the text) [Nuttal, 2002].

In fact, this type of task is very efficient because it shows that unless you draw the teacher-trainees' attention to the idea of the exploitability of the text for the sake of developing communicative skills, what future teachers appreciate most is the number of 'new' words in the text.

Another important teaching skill to be tested is the future teacher's ability to identify and correct

students' oral and written mistakes. In this case evaluation can be arranged through pair work.

E.g. Work in pairs. One of you will act as a teacher and the other will play the part of a student. The 'student' is to say a few words on the following topic... The 'teacher' is to listen to the 'student' and try to identify and correct his/her mistakes. Next, look together at the 'teacher's' performance and answer the following questions:

1. Were the mistakes communicatively relevant?
2. Were the mistakes corrected in a communicative way?
3. Was the correction technique adequate?

Teacher-trainees can be asked to correct written work, too.

E. g. Look at the following written paper. Identify and correct the mistakes.

The important point is that the written work to be corrected should be authentic, that is done by real students, not compiled by the teacher-trainer. The activity will test the teacher-trainees skills of

- identifying mistakes
- choosing the right correction strategy
- assessing the communicative relevance of the mistake
- assessing the relevance of the mistake in terms of accuracy and fluency.

By way of evaluating teaching skills, would-be teachers can also be asked to design lesson plans (for a whole period or just for a section of a class period).

This task will evaluate the teacher's professional discourse, their skill of using classroom language accurately and appropriately.

During the course a very good way of testing students' teaching skills is role-playing.

Two types of role-playing can be set up:

- a) acting out professional discussions
- b) acting out micro-lessons.

E.g. (a) Act out the following international workshop. On the agenda are the following questions:

1. How can you evaluate foreign language teachers' technical knowledge, i. e. their understanding of the linguistic system of the target language, a comprehensive knowledge of basic principles of language learning and teaching, their understanding of the close connection between culture and language, etc.?
2. How can you evaluate teachers' pedagogical skills, i.e. their skill of designing and executing lesson plans, of giving optimal feedback to students, of stimulating teacher-student

interaction, student-student cooperation and teamwork in the classroom, etc?

3. How should the teacher organize self-assessment and self-correction of his / her teaching skills?
4. Can self-assessment and self-correction be impartial?

E.g. (b) Act out the following classroom situation. Choose a listening passage (you may use your textbook) and discuss how you would introduce it to the class.

Remember that it is very important for the teacher to be able to introduce a listening passage properly, which will make the students want to listen to the passage and get the students' minds working on themes close to the ones in the passage and make them listen to the audio text in the light of what they know already about the topic. Allow 2–3 minutes for the introduction. When you have decided on how to introduce the passage, introduce it to the members of your group who will act as if they were students in a class.

Teachers are expected to be very creative and, among other things, be able to design new teaching materials. Some very interesting exercises have been created by our future teachers on the basis of an article devoted to the famous Finnish epic the Kalevala and its role in fostering the Finns' national identity. Here are a few samples of teacher-trainees' creative work: some are fairly familiar speaking tasks, others are more challenging ones.

SPEAKING EXERCISES BASED ON THE TEXT "KALEVALA"

Give a short answer to the questions based on the text:

1. Why does the author compare Kalevala to the Star Wars films? Is the comparison appropriate?
2. What motivated Elias Lonnrot to come such a long way to write down the folk songs?
3. Why do you think Lonnrot arranged the folk songs into a linear story line rather than a collection of individual pieces?
4. How did the Kalevala influence the Finnish national identity?
5. Could you prove that the Finnish people are proud of the Kalevala?

The set of questions quoted above may look like a simple exercise to think of. In fact, it is not. It takes the teacher-trainer some time and effort to prove to the trainees that it is important to make your set of questions meaningful and to arrange them logically.

Answer the following questions and supply arguments to support your point of view.

1. What traditions of your country either oral or written do you know? Did they serve as a stimulus to the building of your national identity?
2. Why do you think people start making up songs that are handed down from person to person?
3. Do you believe that folklore brings people together?
4. Do you believe that culture can help build one's national identity?

Take part in the discussion of the following question. To prove your point you may draw arguments from the text you've read.

1. Why is it important to be aware of your cultural heritage?
2. How does folklore influence one's national identity?
3. Almost every country has epic poems. Would the poem make the same impression on people of different cultures or not? Could you try to prove that poems are culturally determined? Justify your opinion.
4. Prove that the Kalevala is a great poem. Share your arguments with the group-mates.
5. Imagine that you're a Finn. How would the poem make you feel? What thoughts does it evoke?
6. Imagine that your group-mates and you are literary critics. How would you assess the poem? Compare the poem with its counterparts (the Greek Iliad and Odyssey, the Scottish Ossian poems). Discuss their plots, the work on them, the feelings and thoughts the poems awaken.

Say if you agree or disagree with the following quotations. Account for your point of view.

1. What I find interesting about folklore is the dialogue it gives us with storytellers from centuries past. (Terri Windling)
2. Every ancient tale has truth at its heart. <...> But after years and years of retelling, the shape of those old stories changes. What may once have been simple and easily recognized becomes strange, wondrous and magical. Those are only the trappings of the story. The truth lies beneath those fantastic garments (Juliet Marillier).

Comment on the following statement:

"As an epic the Kalevala is the Finnish counterpart to the Germanic Nibelungenlied, the Scottish Ossian poems, the Greek Iliad and Odyssey."

Think of other epics (e. g. Indian Mahabharata). Do you know any Russian epic? Name at least one Russian epic (e. g. The Tale of Igor's Campaign).

Choose one of the following epic poems and present it to the class.

- *Odyssey and Iliad* (Greece)
- *Beowulf* (England)
- *Divine Comedy* (Italy)
- *Nibelungenlied* (Germany)
- *Song of Roland* (France)
- *Cantar de mio Cid* (Spain)
- *Os Lusíadas* (Portugal)
- *Bylinas* (Russia)

Act out the following situation. Imagine that one of the two interlocutors is an expert in Finnish literature, and the other one is a dilettante eager to learn more about the Kalevala.

Now imagine you are taking part in a television talk devoted to the Kalevala. In groups of three discuss the Kalevala as a literary work, its place in Finnish culture in particular and in the world cultural heritage in general. Choose a role you'll play:

1. A popular culture expert who is convinced that the Kalevala would easily serve as a plot for a modern fantasy adventure film and judges the epic from the point of view of contemporary entertainment standards.
2. A man of letters and folklore collector whose interests include Finnish literature. You are very well acquainted with the history of the Kalevala. You believe that it influenced greatly the history of Finland by playing a decisive role in the formation of the Finnish national identity.
3. The host introduces the topic of the talk, the guests, then presents facts and figures that testify to the worldwide recognition of the Kalevala. In the course of the talk the host interjects his remarks, asks questions, expresses his attitude to what the guests say and makes sure everyone has a chance to speak.

Role-Playing. Imagine that you are a guide in the museum of Finnish history which is situated in Moscow. The visitors of the museum know nothing about the Kalevala. You have to tell them everything you know about it. Remember to mention:

- why this epic is so famous;
- what the Kalevala is about;
- what the heroes of this epic are;
- who recorded the songs;

- when the Kalevala was published;
- how many languages it is translated into.

You can also mention some other information that you find interesting.

Then, each of you will present the talk to the class. Be ready to answer the questions that your classmates are to come up with. This is to give you practice in speaking.

Read the following extract from the Kalevala and (a) answer the following questions.

1. What were the duties of a wife at that time?
2. What pieces of advice could Osmotar give to a modern wife?
3. Do you agree with all her pieces of advice? What duties would you add if you were Osmotar?

(b) Act out a dialogue between Osmotar and a modern wife. What pieces of advice could Osmotar give to a modern wife? What questions would a bride ask?

RUNE XXIII. OSMOTAR THE BRIDE-ADVISER

Now the bride must be instructed,
Who will teach the Maid of Beauty?
Osmotar will give instructions
To the bride of Ilmarinen,
Teach her how to live in pleasure,
How to live and reign in glory,
Joyful in her husband's dwelling.
Osmotar in modest accents
Thus the anxious bride addresses;
«Maid of Beauty, lovely sister,
Listen to her sage instructions:
Wander far away, my flower,
From thy father's halls and court-yards
Haste thee to thy husband's village.
«Thou must hence acquire new habits,
Must forget thy former customs,
Mother-love must be forsaken,
Kind words only must thou utter.

Form two concentric circles and sit facing each other. On the blackboard you can see three topics. Work in pairs. You must choose one of the topics and discuss it for three minutes. In three minutes I will stop you and write two more topics on the board. After that those in the outer circle move around one place and with their new partner decide on which topic you want to talk about (you have three minutes to discuss one).

Topics to discuss:

1. No national literature is possible without its folklore.
2. Is maintaining a cultural identity important, or should we all try to become one global culture?

3. Folklore is the most important thing in defining one's cultural identity?
4. Who should be responsible for introducing folklore to young people: school or family?
5. Is it still possible to find people, shepherds, for instance, in remote areas of your country who can hand on tales and oral history? Have you met any?

CONCLUSION

Teacher evaluation is a challenging task. It should be both challenging and creative, varied and motivating. Like any good tests, theory-based questions and practice-oriented activities should aim not only to assess teacher-trainees knowledge and skills, but teach would-be teachers something new and stimulate their professional development.

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