

**РОЛЬ НЕПРЕРЫВНОГО ОЦЕНИВАНИЯ  
В ПРЕПОДАВАНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА  
ДЛЯ СТУДЕНТОВ НЕЯЗЫКОВЫХ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОСТЕЙ**

**THE ROLE OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT  
IN AN ESP COURSE**

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В статье рассматривается роль непрерывного оценивания в ходе преподавания английского языка в высшем учебном заведении для студентов неязыковых специальностей. В данной работе учитывается значение каждой отдельной стадии непрерывного оценивания и приводится положительный опыт оценивания студентов факультета компьютерных наук Воронежского государственного университета.

*Ключевые слова:* курс иностранного языка; программа обучения; непрерывное оценивание; формативное; промежуточное; итоговое оценивание; презентация.

Continuous assessment plays a significant role in higher educational institutions. The article deals with the relevance of every continuous assessment phase and holds up as an example its practical value and positive results achieved at Voronezh State University at Computer Science Department.

*Keywords:* foreign language course; curriculum; formative; interim; summative assessment; presentation.

The article deals with one of the most urgent assessment categories – continuous assessment performed by teachers in the classroom to identify the level of learning of individual students, a class or some other grouping on different aspects of the curriculum. Continuous assessment in higher education cannot be underestimated as it is to determine the student's level of knowledge, skill, or understanding. It diagnoses problematic areas, encourages trainers and students to make decisions and helps to evaluate the learning process at each step. The assessment area can be considered highly perspective as it allows tracking progress and offers students guidance and support to improve during the course.

In general, continuous assessment is viewed as regular assessment of the learning performance related to a course module and that is separate from examinations, and accompanied by regular feedback.

Core features of continuous assessment enable the process and results of assessment to meet three principles: fairness, breadth of coverage, and feedback. These three facilitate basic features of continuous assessment, which prove to be:

- *classroom-based* as it is held in real time mode;
- *flexible*, presupposing a wide variety of parameters such as location, duration, timing, etc. to evaluate different aspects of learning;
- *teacher-driven* and *student-driven*, measuring the general level of comprehension and that of one's peers;
- *involving a wide range of techniques*, including task-performance, problem-solving, self-introduction preparation, and project implementation;
- *standardized*, deploying students through a set of learning standards;
- *non-standardized*, adapting the content, degree of difficulty, frequency and other particular needs or levels of individual students or student community as a whole.

Standardized assessment approach is obviously at a disadvantage compared with Continuous assessment results. Although standardized assessments make it possible to compare the achievements of large student groups they are generally shifted in favor of tests that are relatively narrow and of limited utility. Besides, the test becomes the end goal in itself and it is practically impossible to track the achievements of an individual student.

Furthermore, comparing with both sample-based and census-based large-scale assessments continuous assessment has a distinction in some notable ways:

- the classroom teacher is liable for it;
- the full set of academic competences can be covered by it;
- students' abilities to practice performing tasks based on the local context can be sampled to a great extent;
- it can provoke the development of students' personal competences and skills providing a background for confidence, creativity, critical thinking, persistence, collaboration, curiosity, etc.

Continuous assessment can be used both as a summative and a formative tool. As a summative one, it can be targeted at estimating any kind of progress. Suggested a formative tool it can provide feedback, problems identification and readjustment of a course aimed at progress of a student or a group of students.

Usually continuous assessment structure can be drawn in a form of a triangle which body is formed by several assessment layers. The basement layer represents a formative assessment. It covers a range of diagnostic tests, preparatory tasks, regular classroom assignments a teacher can use to assist the process of learning by students. Such ungraded feedback enables students to

reflect on their goals and track their minor achievements. The aim of a formative assessment is to improve performance and achieve successful outcomes. A formative assessment can obviously take much time but its advantage is that it is ongoing. This allows getting step-by-step feedback to identify problems at the early stage.

The middle layer of the triangle indicates an interim assessment stage. An interim assessment appears to be test administered at different intervals during the term to check and monitor students' progress and guide future instruction. Usually this type of assessment does not follow the schedule but aims at measuring students' growth, determines problematic patterns and helps to plan and monitor additional instructions.

And finally the apex of the triangle serves as the final, end-of-the-year examination, classic summative assessment. The summative assessment evaluates student learning, knowledge, proficiency, or success at the end of an instructional period (unit, course, program, etc.). Summative assessments are almost always formally graded and often heavily weighted.

The strategy of a foreign language course should be oriented towards linking adjustment, purpose, frequency of administration as an assessment may constructively influence teaching and learning factors. The interrelationship between all stages of the assessment during the course should play a primary role in strengthening the quality dimensions of the educational process. An assessment may remain relevant along the purpose spectrum irrespective the tester and the tested. Clearly more centralized, standardized, large-scale, sample-based summative instruments favour accountability, and the rest favour adjustment.

The continuous assessment line has proved its practical value. Fairly significant results have been achieved at Voronezh State University (VSU) at Computer Science Department.

For about fifteen years the curriculum of the ESP course has been implemented to grade academic achievements continuously. The course includes three interim assessments a term encouraging both teachers and students to track and correct the effectiveness of practical methods and techniques. Classroom activities are aimed at general and particular skills development to progress in language learning and evaluate the pursuit of goals. The final assessment is carried out at the end of the two year ESP course and takes stock of all academic efforts.

Continuous assessment at the Computer Science Department undergoes several phases where the first one is diagnostic assessment. At the very beginning of the first academic year all students of the Department are to take an entry test enabling teachers to stream them and rate according to the level of language acquisition. The results are considered at the formation of study

groups and readjustment of the academic plan in order to define the starting point for each group and further revising of the progress. This test is compiled of comprehension tasks from A1 to B2 levels and allows diagnosing initial level of knowledge and problems to be solved.

The ESP course for students of Non-linguistic departments of VSU was designed with due consideration of the Model Program in Foreign Languages for Non-linguistic Departments. The Program introduces teaching foreign languages for university ESP students in four communicative spheres: Everyday, Socio-cultural, Academic and Professional. English Chair for Science Departments at Voronezh State University (VSU) created and released resource books devoted to each sphere where information and materials are compiled from different available sources.

The logical continuation of designing particular educational space required creating a set of formative assessment patterns providing variety of effective means of evaluating foreign language teaching/learning process. First of all, the resource books themselves contain a variety of multilevel assignments forming and testing vocabulary acquisition on different topics, grammatical sectional tests assuring knowledge of basic language structures and their usage, phonetic practice drills developing systematic approach to this problematic issue. Topics for projects offered in the resource books allow students choose their favorite ones. Project work helps teachers verify trainees' practical abilities in managing complex tasks. Formative assessment is identified with preparatory stage that is prior to interim phase, or end-of-the cycle tests.

The interim period does not have particular time reference and interim assessment can be held after finishing a unit, a module, a topic or a term. Creating sample tests for organizing interim assessment saves time and maximizes the potential of teachers involved into the process of evaluating learners' progress, effectiveness of methods and revision of tasks for classroom activities and supplementary materials for group, individual and self-assessing work. These tests and assignments are issued in the regular collection of academic papers "Английский для нефилологов. Проблемы ESP". The materials and assignments placed in the edition appear to be motivating and meet students' demands, suggesting implementation of integrative skills verification (writing + speaking; reception + production; communication + cognition). Assessment stuff is based on texts of diverse types and genres from popular science articles to resumes and cover letters. Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) platform is an enormous boon to the teachers in organizing work that students perform on their own.

Summative assessment phase is introduced in the form of end-of-the-course presentation. Presentation based on one of the topics within Profes-

sional Sphere is approved as a form of final Foreign Language proficiency exam at VSU English Chair for Science Departments. It aims at evaluation and assessment of all ESP competences and skills acquired by the student during the studying period. The assessment of overall progress is calculated according to presentation assessment scale criteria: body language and eye contact, speaking skills, grammar, word choice, pronunciation, visuals, organization, interaction with audience and length of presentation.

Nowadays highlighting professional realization and personal development is of a primary goal within higher educational and social requirements. So a university ESP course is to verify and assess linguistic, socio-cultural and pragmatic competences as a whole. It involves getting skills through experience acquired in interactions and activities of the studying period.

It is evident that continuous assessment serves these principles.

1. Is ultimately improves learning and is a part of a process of teaching that enables students to understand the aims of their learning and how the quality of their achievement will be judged. Obviously, continuous assessment enables and motivates students to show their progress.

2. Assessment methods enable progress in all important learning goals and promote the active engagement of students in their learning and its assessment.

3. Continuous assessment methods, undoubtedly, meet ESP standards.

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## **ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОЙ ПЛАТФОРМЫ MOODLE В ПРОЦЕССЕ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКАМ**

### **USING OF THE LEARNING PLATFORM MOODLE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING**

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В статье рассматриваются вопросы повышения качества и доступности обучения иностранным языкам с использованием современных Интернет-технологий; раскрываются актуальные вопросы внедрения и использования образовательной платформы LMS Moodle; приводятся преимущества и способы предоставления материала, проверки знаний и контроля успеваемости студентов.

*Ключевые слова:* Интернет-технологии; образовательная платформа LMS Moodle; электронный учебный курс; виртуальное пространство; ресурсы курса; элементы курса.

The article observes the issues of improving the quality and accessibility of teaching foreign languages using modern Internet technologies; discovers actual aspects of implementation and use of the educational platform LMS Moodle; reveals the advantages and methods of providing material, testing knowledge and monitoring the students progress.

*Keywords:* Internet technologies; educational platform LMS Moodle; Electronic study course; virtual space; course resources; course elements.