

UDC 378.147

Yu. V. Vaniuk, I. V. Piniuta, Ph. D. in Education, Associate Professor
Institution of Education “Baranavichy State University”, 21 Voykova Str.,
225404 Baranavichy, the Republic of Belarus, +375 (163) 48 74 02, pinyuta@msn.com

REFLECTIVE COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO ASSESS PRE-SERVICE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS' CONTENT AND EDUCATIONAL LITERACY

The article addresses the challenge of redefining assessment approaches in higher education, focusing on the content and educational literacy of pre-service foreign language teachers. Traditional assessment methods, which emphasize test scores and grades, prove inadequate in capturing the complexity of learning processes and neglecting critical competencies such as critical thinking and problem-solving. This study introduces the reflective collaborative approach, founded on two core principles: reflection and collaboration. It emphasizes the core strategies and techniques to foster a deeper understanding of the subject matter. The reflective collaborative approach relies on three key strategies: self-reflection and error detection, peer training and evaluation, group cross-questioning. The article considers rubrics, classroom observations, interviews, group discussion and action planning as primary tools used to promote the reflective collaborative approach. These methods, constituting together a reflexive approach, offer a promising alternative to traditional evaluation methods.

Key words: reflective collaborative approach; formative assessment; reflection; collaboration; reflection techniques; literacy assessment.

Ref.: 14 titles.

Ю. В. Ванюк, И. В. Пинюта, кандидат педагогических наук, доцент
Учреждение образования «Барановичский государственный университет», ул. Войкова, 21,
225404 Барановичи, Республика Беларусь, +375 (163) 48 74 02, pinyuta@msn.com

ПРИМЕНЕНИЕ ГРУППОВОГО РЕФЛЕКСИВНОГО ПОДХОДА К ОЦЕНКЕ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОГО И СОДЕРЖАТЕЛЬНОГО КОМПОНЕНТОВ ГРАМОТНОСТИ БУДУЩИХ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА

Статья посвящена анализу и пересмотру подходов к оценке в учреждениях высшего образования с акцентом на содержательный и образовательный компоненты грамотности будущих преподавателей иностранных языков. Традиционные методы оценки, ориентированные на результаты тестирования и отметки, оказываются неэффективными, поскольку не отражают всей сложности процессов обучения и не учитывают такие важные компетенции, как критическое мышление и проблемное обучение. В данном исследовании представлен групповой рефлексивный подход, в основе которого лежат два принципа: рефлексии и сотрудничества. При этом особое внимание уделяется стратегиям и методам, способствующим более глубокому пониманию предмета. Групповой рефлексивный подход опирается на три ключевые стратегии: самоанализ и выявление ошибок, обучение и оценку со стороны коллег, групповое перекрестное анкетирование. Использование рубрик, наблюдения, интервью, групповых дискуссий и планирования рассматривается как главный инструмент для продвижения группового рефлексивного подхода. Данные методы, в совокупности составляющие рефлексивный подход, предлагают перспективную альтернативу традиционным методам оценки.

Ключевые слова: групповой рефлексивный подход; формирующая оценка; рефлексия; сотрудничество; рефлексивные техники; оценка методической грамотности.

Библиогр.: 14 назв.

Introduction. The article is devoted to the acute problem of substantiation of the approach to implement in assessing university students' professional competence. The focus is given on content and educational literacy of pre-service foreign language teachers in language pedagogy. The purpose of this study is to substantiate the reflective collaborative approach: its principles, strategies, and techniques.

Materials and methods of research. This study was conducted at Baranavichy State University (Belarus) among 25 students who were getting their qualification in foreign language teaching (English and German) in academic year 2022—2023. The study employed a qualitative research approach where a case study research design was used. Qualitative data on the approach were collected by using key informant interviews and focus group discussion. Content analysis was used to discuss the data which were obtained through interviews and focus group comments and suggest innovations in teaching practices.

Research results and discussion. In this study, it was revealed that one of the primary disadvantages of traditional approaches is their focus on learners' test scores and grades. Such an approach can create a narrow view of student learning and may not accurately capture the complexity of learning processes. Moreover, traditional assessments often measure only one aspect of learning, such as factual knowledge or basic skills, while ignoring more complex competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. Another feature of traditional assessment which worries educators is that it often prioritizes summative over formative assessment, which does not provide sufficient opportunities for students to receive feedback and support in time. Summative assessment procedures, such as examinations or standardized tests, are typically used to measure students' overall achievement at the end of the course. In contrast, "formative assessment involves providing ongoing feedback and support to students throughout the learning process to help them improve their understanding and performance" [1]. Meanwhile, research has shown that "formative assessment can have a significant impact on student learning outcomes" [2]. Moreover, traditional assessment tends to be teacher-centered rather than student-centered. In the former, the teacher is a "the primary evaluator and decision-maker, while students are seen as passive recipients of assessment feedback" [3]. However, research has shown that involving students in self and peer assessment can enhance their motivation and engagement in learning [3]. Traditional assessment approaches may also be limited in their ability to address the needs of diverse learners, as they may not take into account individual differences in learning styles, cultural backgrounds, or prior knowledge.

So, traditional approaches to assessment in language education have certain limitations which are able to hinder student learning and teacher professional development.

Taking into consideration the limitations of traditional assessment approaches, there is an evidence for innovative approaches, and we suggest to use the reflective collaborative approach in the classroom. In pedagogical discourse, the term "approach" is getting a growing popularity among teachers and scholars due to diverse learners' needs and rapidly changing social demands. It refers to a systematic and comprehensive framework that guides instructional practices and learning methodologies. Therefore, it serves as a theoretical foundation, allowing educators to create meaningful and engaging learning environments. The definition of "approach" has been explored and discussed by prominent researchers in the field of education: E. Anthony sees the approach "as a starting point in implementing learning because the chosen approach can help us in achieving the learning objectives" [4]. Similarly, D. Brown defines this category as a "coherent set of assumptions and beliefs about the nature of language teaching and learning, which underlie classroom practice" [2]. An approach gives the overall wisdom, it provides direction, and sets expectations to the entire spectrum of teaching as a complicated process. Furthermore, approach sets the general rule or general principle to make learning possible.

As far as an approach encompasses "a set of underlying principles, strategies, and techniques employed to facilitate effective teaching and learning experiences" [5], we will consider the reflective collaborative approach in these terms.

This approach rests on two main principles: reflection and collaboration. Reflective assessment “involves a process of self-evaluation and self-reflection, in which students and teachers engage in ongoing reflection on their learning and teaching practices” [6]. Reflective assessment enhances student learning outcomes “by providing opportunities for students to set goals, monitor their progress, and reflect on their learning” [7]. Reflection is a critical component of the reflective assessment approach as it involves thinking deeply about one’s own teaching practices, beliefs, and experiences. D. Schön points that it is “a process of introspection that enables teachers to gain insights into their instructional methods, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions to enhance student learning outcomes” [8]. Reflective practices allow teachers to engage in metacognition, examining their assumptions, biases, and values, and considering how these influence their teaching approaches [9]. According to T. Farrell through reflection, “teachers can analyze the effectiveness of their strategies, consider alternative approaches, and adapt their instructional methods to better meet the needs of their students” [10].

Meanwhile, collaboration involves working together to share ideas, insights, and expertise, and to collectively improve teaching practices and student learning outcomes [8]. In the context of reflective collaborative assessment, collaboration is essential for fostering dialogue, promoting diverse perspectives, and expanding professional knowledge and understanding. This approach offers a framework that encourages active engagement and meaningful dialogue among participants, fostering a deeper understanding of learning material and promoting collective growth. It is rooted in the principles of interaction, cooperation, and problem-solving. Collaborative assessment “involves a process of shared decision-making and evaluation, in which students and teachers work together to identify learning goals, evaluate student progress, and provide feedback” [11]. Collaborative assessment can enhance teacher development by “providing opportunities for teachers to share ideas, learn from each other, and receive feedback from their colleagues” [11].

Reflective collaborative assessment is an approach to assessment that focuses on the involvement of students and teachers in a collaborative process of reflection and evaluation. Here, assessment is seen as a form of dialogue between students and teachers, with both parties working together to develop a shared understanding of learning goals, evaluate student progress, and provide feedback [10].

On the one hand, in research related to co-reflection, I. Piniuta argues that better reflection happens when reflective learning and reflective teaching meet to generate improvements for the sake of minimising time, efforts, failures, and enhancing learner motivation [8]. The benefits of this approach can be illustrated with the CO-REFLECT strategy, which means:

- C** — collaborate with peer teachers and learners;
- O** — optimise objectives, content, procedures, and tools;
- R** — reveal perceptions through classroom-based research;
- E** — evaluate the data obtained: enhance what is efficient and eliminate what is retarding;
- F** — facilitate perceptions of each other forming deeper perceptions of personalities;
- L** — learn to learn, and learn to teach;
- E** — enrich reflective experiences;
- C** — create a better educational environment;
- T** — think critically about how to teach/learn more efficiently.

On the other hand, in the classroom we implement the strategies: a) self-reflection and error detection; b) peer evaluation and training and c) group cross-questioning. These strategies are designed to facilitate the exploration and analysis of individual and collective experiences, allowing participants to critically reflect on their own performance and engage in constructive discussions with their peers. Self-reflection serves as an initial step where participants are encouraged to independently review and assess their own strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. This strategy encourages individuals to engage in introspection and analyse their own learning process. Through self-reflection, students are prompted to recognize errors or misconceptions, and build the trajectory for their individual learning. Peer training and evaluation strategy involves engaging in peer-to-peer

interactions for the purpose of training, evaluating, and providing feedback. Pre-service teachers collaborate with their peers to share insights, exchange knowledge, and offer constructive criticism. By evaluating and providing feedback, they develop their analytical and critical thinking skills. Peer training and evaluation facilitate a supportive learning environment where participants can learn from each other's experiences, perspectives, and approaches. It promotes mutual learning, encourages diverse viewpoints, and cultivates a sense of collective responsibility towards professional development. Group cross-questioning involves the collaborative exploration and analysis of concepts, theories, and ideas through group discussions and cross-questioning. Pre-service teachers engage in thoughtful and critical discussions where they pose questions to each other, challenge assumptions, and seek clarification. Group cross-questioning encourages active participation, stimulates deeper thinking, and broadens perspectives. Through this process, students gain exposure to alternative viewpoints, expand their understanding of complex concepts, and refine their reasoning skills. It fosters a collaborative and inquiry-based learning environment that promotes intellectual engagement and the exploration of multiple perspectives.

The above strategies involve a range of activities, including peer and self-assessment, group discussion, and individual reflection. Through them students and teachers engage in ongoing dialogue and reflection on their learning and teaching practices, identifying areas of strength and weakness, and developing strategies for improvement. After tests completion, students work in small groups to provide feedback on each other's work, using rubrics to guide their assessment.

To facilitate collaboration and reflection among the participants it is necessary to employ a range of techniques. For this reason, rubrics, classroom observations, interviews, group discussion, and action planning are the primary tools used to promote a reflective collaborative approach. Rubrics are to guide the assessment and evaluation of teachers' content and educational literacy. They are considered effective in providing clear and consistent criteria for evaluation, as well as facilitating student learning and self-assessment. Another tool is collaborative interview that stimulates comprehension of the teacher's perspectives and experiences. Moreover, it provides a shared understanding among the participants. Collaborative interviews have been found to be effective in progression of "deeper understanding and insight into complex phenomena" [12]. Group discussion is another way to advance dialogue and reflection among the participants. Structured and unstructured discussions stimulate more open and shared understanding among the participants. S. D. Brookfield describes group discussion as an effective tool for encouraging critical thinking, problem solving, and self-reflection [13].

Reflection techniques serve as a fundamental element of the reflective collaborative approach. In the context of this approach, reflection techniques provide a structured framework for students to analyze and evaluate their own thinking, as well as share and receive feedback from their peers. By engaging in reflection together, participants can gain valuable insights, challenge assumptions, and develop a shared understanding of the subject matter. An example of reflection technique used in the reflective collaborative approach is "think-pair-share". In this activity, participants first think independently about a specific concept or topic, then pair up with a peer to share their understanding and discuss any areas of confusion or differing interpretations. Finally, they share their joint reflections with the larger group, allowing for a collective exchange of ideas and perspectives. Another technique employed in the reflective collaborative approach is "critical incident analysis". This technique involves identifying specific questions or incidents from the learning process that prompted significant learning moments or changes in understanding. Participants analyze these incidents in detail, exploring the factors that contributed to the learning experience and considering the implications for future teaching practice. This analysis is then shared within the group, facilitating collective learning and growth.

Other examples of the reflective collaborative approach include "cause-problem-effect analysis", "three statements reflection". "Cause-problem-effect analysis" is a reflection technique employed to explore the root causes of an issue, its resultant problems, and the subsequent effects. "Three statements reflection" involves participants expressing their thoughts, ideas, or reactions

regarding a specific topic, concept, or experience through three distinct statements. The first statement should describe the most useful fact on the given topic. The second statement includes participant's personal reflections and thoughts related to the topic. The final statement involves participants posing an opposite opinion on the topic. These techniques provide opportunities for individuals to critically examine problematic issues, evaluate statements or ideas, express their thoughts on key concepts, and address challenging questions or issues [14].

Conclusion. The reflective collaborative approach is a pedagogical framework that promotes active learners' engagement, their critical reflection, and collaborative problem-solving activities among participants. It is an educational approach that encourages individuals to reflect on their own learning, engage in dialogue with peers, and collectively explore challenges and find solutions. Its main principles are reflection and collaboration, it is implemented by means of the co-reflective strategy in the classroom that comprises self-reflection and error detection, peer evaluation and training, and group cross-questioning. These strategies are implemented in the classroom in the techniques think-pair-share, critical incident analysis, cause-problem-effect analysis and three statements reflection.

References

1. *Oxford, R. L.* Language Learning Strategies : What Every Teacher Should Know / R. L. Oxford. — New York : Newbury House, 1990. — 212 p.
2. *O'Brien, D. G.* Redefining competence through the multiple literacies of intermediality, visual arts, and representation [Electronic resource] / D. G. O'Brien // Reading online. — Vol. 4 (11). — Mode of access: <http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/Obrien>. — Date of access: 20.11.2023.
3. *Garton, S.* Investigating Global Practices in Teaching English to Young Learners / S. Garton, F. Copland, A. Burns. — Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. — 301 p.
4. *Smyth, J.* Critical pedagogies and transformative learning: identity and meaning-making in higher education / J. Smyth // Journal of Transformative Education. — 2011. — Vol. 9 (3). — P. 166—182.
5. *Wallace, M. J.* Training Foreign Language Teachers. A Reflective Approach / M. J. Wallace. — Cambridge : Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995. — 180 p.
6. *Gibbs, G.* Conditions under which assessment supports students' learning / G. Gibbs, C. Simpson // Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. — 2005. — Vol. 1 (1). — P. 3—31.
7. *Boud, D.* Promoting reflection in professional courses: The challenge of context / D. Boud, R. Cohen // Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education. — 2018. — № 43 (8). — P. 1315—1325.
8. *Piniuta, I.* Students' vs. teachers' reflections on asynchronous distance learning in the new normal / I. Piniuta // Second Language Teaching in the Digital Era: Perspectives and Practices / ed. by E. Chaika. — Newcastle upon Tyne : Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022. — P. 96—123.
9. *Bennett, R. E.* Formative assessment : a critical review / R. E. Bennet // Assessment in Education. — 2011. — Vol. 18 (1). — P. 5—26.
10. *Crookes, G.* A practicum in TESOL : professional development through teaching practice / G. Crookes. — Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2003. — 318 p.
11. *Vanyuk, Yu. V.* Lingua-and-didactic literacy assessment / Yu. V. Vanyuk // Иностранные языки и современный мир : сб. материалов Междунар. науч. конф. студентов, Брест, 14 апр. 2023 г. / Брест. гос. ун-т им. А. С. Пушкина ; редкол.: Л. М. Максимук [и др.]. — Брест : БрГУ, 2023. — С. 38—42.
12. *Nunan, D.* Research Methods in Language Learning / D. Nunan. — Cambridge University Press, 1992. — 256 p.
13. *Brookfield, S. D.* Discussion as a Way of Teaching : tools and techniques for democratic classrooms / S. D. Brookfield, S. Preskill. — Hoboken : John Wiley & Sons, 2012. — 336 p.
14. *Vanyuk, Y. V.* Definition and structure of foreign language teachers' methodological literacy / Y. V. Vanyuk // Профессиональное иноязычное образование в контексте инноваций XXI века : сб. ст. по результатам II Науч.-практ. семинара с междунар. участием, Барановичи, 10 нояб. 2022 г. / М-во образования Респ. Беларусь, Баранович. гос. ун-т ; редкол.: И. С. Криштоп [и др.]. — Барановичи : БарГУ, 2022. — С. 133—139.

Received by the editorial staff 04.10.2023.