

1. INTRODUCTION

We are going to analyse one of the projects the students will have to do towards the end of the course. This project is inside the book we have been using so far, which is *Shout! Student's Book 2*, by Rob Nolasco, Oxford University Press (1998). This test belongs to a unit that we have seen during the term so the students are already familiarised with the contents.

This test is an instrument of evaluation that the teacher is going to use to know if the students have understood that unit and, in consequence, his method of unit planning has had a satisfactory result; that is to say, it is necessary for the teacher to check if the process of teaching and learning has been successful.

As we have said a test is very important to examine a student, but it is not the only element in the process of evaluation, The teacher has to take the assistance, the work in class, the student's attitude during the course and many other elements into account when giving the final mark.

2. THE DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS OF THE TESTS

There are several objectives that tests and evaluation involve. These objectives are the following:

- a) To give us information about the way in which the students learn, the process

We have to know that the rhythm in which the teacher explains is proportional to the one in which the students understand and assume the explanations given.

- b) Reinforcing knowledge

We can create tests for a specific skill in a unit, something that is basic for the correct usage on English and that we need or students to use correctly. This can be either the usage of a structure or vocabulary.

3. THE CONTENTS TESTS SHOULD HAVE

The content in each test depends on the goal they want to reach. There are four types of tests:

1. Streaming tests

It must contain the basic knowledge the students are supposed to have acquired at the moment of doing the test. This kind of test must treat the basic linguistic skills:

- Writing
- Reading
- Listening
- Speaking

This is in my opinion the best kind of test as it is the more complete. The student must prove that he has successfully reached the goals the teacher had fixed in the four different skills in which the language learning is divided. However it may be a little too long and it is very difficult to test the speaking of all the students in a class, as there will be around 30. In addition to this, the test we are analysing covers just one unit and it wouldn't be profitable to spend so much time in a test of this kind. This type of test is then useful to do the final examination, at the end of the year, when the students are supposed to show the grade in which they have acquired the different contents of the textbook.

2. Initial diagnosis

This is a test that is used to know which is the level of the class when the term starts. This will help the teacher to prepare the classes, as he would have a better idea of how much do the students know already. This test will be based on the contents of the textbook they had used the previous year. The students should all pass this test but in case they don't, the teacher should revise the goals of the previous year to make sure they have understood the contents in order to prepare the class to acquire new ones.

3. Controlling tests

This test is the more usual in almost all the secondary schools by teachers and consists on the typical exam with the specific contents studied in the class. Through that test, the teacher checks if he/she is teaching well or not, and if students are learning well or not, or even if they have studied the unit.

4. Performance tests

The vast majority of teachers do not use this kind of exams because they cover a global proficiency in which students have to combine all the linguistic contents and the four skills.

This test must be oriented to another way of learning English, that is to say, it is a good method to testing all those students who are going to specialise themselves in the professional speaking of English. So, this is a good test for academies, universities and this kind of institutions in general, but it won't be suitable to use them in schools. It takes a longer time than the one estimated for tests in our educational system.

4. CHARACTERISTICS A GOOD TEST SHOULD HAVE

1. Validity

There are three types of validity:

a) Content validity

We refer with this term to the validity of the contents that should appear in the test. The contents which should be in the test are those that have been studied in the programme of the subject, but all the contents must be included in the exam in a balanced way.

Anyway, the test will show if they have learnt all the contents that have been taught by their teacher.

This is a very relevant feature in the test because there are teachers that sometimes include in the exams some contents of the textbooks which, although they have recommended to study, nevertheless they have not been explained to them in class. This is that sometimes, there is no time to deal with another material in the class and some teachers tell the students to study, but without explanation in class; and according to my view, this is a big error, because students have not understood these notes and because they have to study what teachers have explained.

b) Apparent validity

In this section we explain more or less what I have mentioned before, that is to say, teachers should not include in the tests the extra programme elements.

c) Empirical validity

If these tests do not contain any surprise must demonstrate other external factors like the teacher's impression of the students, the correspondence between the mark of the students with their work in class and home, etc.

However, some teachers do not give importance to those factors, so it is a bit controversial element.

It is, undoubtedly, an element extremely important for several reasons which we are going to expose setting some examples:

- Let's imagine there is a boy who has always done his homework very well and, without mistakes and suddenly he obtains a mark of C in the exam. Then, the teacher will try to know if he has had a bad day or if his brothers are who have always done his homework.
- Another example is that the teacher has a girl in the class who rarely does her homework, but when she does it is plenty of mistakes. However, she obtains a mark of B in the test of evaluation. This fact would lead the teacher to try to investigate if she has cheated in the exam or if she has simply made an effort to improve her marks in this subject.

Owing to these reasons, I think the teachers have to bear in mind this element to know more their students, their yield, capacities, eagerness to improve, etc.

2. Reliability

It is important that the results of tests of evaluation are reliable for the teacher. Depending on the sense in which such reliability is taken, we can make the next division:

a) Marking reliability

It has to do with the subjectivity or, by the contrary, the objectivity of the results of the tests. The teacher should correct the tests with the maximum objectivity as possible, and tell each student his mark and explain them which and how many mistakes they

have had in the test. In this way, the teacher can avoid the subjectivity when correcting.

b) Testing reliability

A test will be more or less reliable depending on the amount of contents which appear in it. This is that the more contents which students have studied appear in the test, the more reliable will be the test.

If a teacher only includes a part of the unit in the exam, this teacher will not be able to know certainly if the students have learned the whole unit.

3. Feasibility

Teachers must design a test whose characteristics make the students possible to do it in relation with the time at their disposal, the contents, etc.

The test has to be feasible for students, and the time students dispose must be proportional to the extension of the test. The exercises and knowledge belonging to the test should be equivalent to what they have studied in the unit.

In addition to this, I think there is another thing very important related to the feasibility: tests must not be a surprise for students.

4. Discrimination

This word is used here with the sense of showing differences, that is to say, when a test discriminates, it only detects the differences between the students. For instance, is a good instrument to know how many students have learnt well, in which area students stand out and which areas they find more difficult, etc.

5. DIFFERENT TYPES OF TESTS

There are two types according to:

1. The degree of integration of the four skills. Following this criteria, we can find the next kind of tests:

a) Discrete tests.

In these tests, the linguistic contents and the skills are dealt in isolation. For example, exercises about matching, to choose between true or false sentences, etc.

b) Comprehensive tests.

Those are the tests in which the linguistic contents and the basic skills are integrated but in different degrees.

For example, in an exercise of dialoguing, students have to listen, speak, and they also are using the linguistic contents.

2. The students' freedom when answering the tests. Depending on the magnitude of the freedom, we can find:

- Objective tests.

They are tests in which there are not freedom to answer the questions and, therefore, it is very easy to correct, such as an activity of dictation.

- Subjective tests.

In this kind of tests, students can answer what they think, such as an exercise of composition.

After having done a brief outline of the type of tests, is the time of design the exam, having into account that the material studied in this section is the first conditional and exercises of vocabulary related to criminals. Students also will put into practice their knowledge of making a composition. In this way, the teacher can see which the areas in which students are more skilful or and which they are not.

6. EXAM

The model of exam I have prepared can be useful to examine the students of the level we are treating, which is the 4th course of ESO. It is related to values, which is the main subject treated in unit 6. Here the use of the first conditional is very important and this is basic for the learning of grammar.

EXAM OF THE UNIT 6: VALUES

PART I

I'LL NEVER CHEAT AGAIN!

Mum and Dad were proud of me because I've always done well in exams. Last year, I was studying Chemistry, Biology, and Physics. I liked Chemistry and Biology, I was quite good at them, but I hated Physics. I found it really difficult to remember all the formulae. I had important exams after the holidays and I was very worried about them. I thought I was sure to fail, so... I decided to cheat.

I wrote the formulae I needed on a small piece of paper, and stuck it on the back of my ruler. I knew the exam hall was very big and I felt quite confident. When I sat down to start the exam, I was surprised because it was really quite easy. I didn't need my notes. I finished the exam and checked my answers. I started packing up my things. Then I knocked my pencil case off my desk. Everything in it, including the ruler, fell out on to the floor. A teacher who was standing near me came to help me and she picked up the ruler. She saw the notes on it, and she just look at me. I was so scared. I began to cry, and she told me to follow her to the head teacher's office.

The head teacher looked very serious and said that because I had cheated, I would automatically fail the exam. I told her I hadn't used the notes, but she didn't believe me. The head teacher told my parents, and they were furious. I felt terrible and really ashamed. I'll never cheat again

1. Read the article and answer the questions.

- a) What exam did Sarah decide to cheat in? Why?
- b) Where did she write the formulae?
- c) How did the teacher find out that she was cheating?
- d) What did the teacher do?
- e) Did Sarah pass the exam?

- f) How did Sarah's parents react?

PART II

2. Choose the correct tenses.

- a) If I *pass*/'ll *pass* my exams, I *go*/'ll *go* to university.
- b) Ian *doesn't take*/*won't take* the exam if he's/'ll be ill.
- c) If I *do*/'ll *do* well in my exams, Mum *lets*/*will let* me go to the beach.
- d) If you *fail*/'ll the exams, you *have*/'ll *have* to take them again.

3. Complete the sentences. Use the correct form of the verbs.

- a) If I (have) time, I (do) some revision this evening.
- b) My mum and dad (be) happy if I (pass) my exams.
- c) Clare (get) good marks if she (work) hard.
- d) They (fail) the exams if they (not do) enough revision.

PART III

4. Match the words and definitions.

mugger burglar shoplifter pickpocket joyrider hijacker

- a) Someone who attacks people in the street and takes their money.
- b) Someone who takes things from a shop without paying for them.
- c) Someone who forces the pilot to give them control of a plane in the middle of a journey.
- d) Someone who takes things out of somebody's pocket or bag.
- e) Someone who steals a car and drives it round very fast.
- f) Someone who goes into other people's houses and takes things.

5. Match the adjectives and definitions.

special free delicious powerful

- a) Something that you don't have to pay for.
- b) Something that is very good to eat.
- c) Something that is very strong.
- d) Something that is not usual or ordinary.

PART IV

Write a composition. You can choose one of these two options:

- a) What do you think about cheating?
- b) Can you think of any solution to the problem of teenage crime?

7. CONCLUSION

The exercises have been presented the way the students are used to, so that when they face the exam they can do it without any extra difficulty that a new kind of exercise would add. The content is valid because it is all things that have been studied in the unit, there isn't any extra material that could confound the students.

On the other hand, the clear majority of the activities are objective, except for the last one which is a composition.

I think I have designed a practical exam easy to do, and with a coherent extension including all the explained contents.

Finally, as I have said at the beginning of the project, in the process of evaluation is also important the interest of students in class, which it will be reflected in their attendance, participation in class, homework, etc.

8. BIOGRAPHY

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