Exams, Sustainable Assessment and Learner Autonomy

In **Assessment and Autonomy in Language Learning (2015)**, Carol J. Everhard argues that "*the field of **autonomy in language learning** has become something of a **secret garden** …*" and that teachers feel in very different ways about it.

Which of these do you feel most identified with?

a) Some language teachers apparently remain oblivious to its existence.
b) Some are aware of its existence but are unable to see its relevance to their particular teaching situation.
c) Some are intrigued by its possibilities, but despite their best efforts they are unable to find either the point of entrance or the key to the "garden".
d) Then, there are others who believe they have discovered a point of entry to the promotion of autonomy, but find themselves having to contend with a myriad of problems.

Three different types of assessment

Summative Assessment	Formative Assessment	Sustainable Assessment
The process used to determine how much someone has learned or the degree to which they have progressed with their learning over time, and can be used for certification	It enables teachers and learners to make informed choices and decisions with regard to future teaching, learning and possible learning pathways, based on assessment feedback and feedforward	It is an ongoing process of activities which generate feedback and develop capacities as self-regulating and autonomous learners
Assessment **OF** learning	Assessment **FOR** learning	Assessment **AS** learning

Three approaches to teaching & learning

Dimensions	Transmission approach	Transaction approach	Transformation approach
Power & Control	Institution or teachers determine syllabus as well as pace, mode and style of instruction	Student-centred; shared control; cooperation among peers; scaffolding	Community of learners; emphasis on learners who establish own goals and targets and choose own materials and pace of learning
Nature of knowledge	Transmission of knowledge; linear process; predefined content, ideas & skills	Collaborative identification of what learners need to know; cooperative exploration	Transformation of knowledge; construction of personal knowledge; personal identification of needs
Learners & learning	Passive recipient of information; transfer of knowledge from teacher to learners; focus on content and product	Negotiation with teacher and other learners; shared ownership, responsibility and development of learning plan	Active participation in cooperative groups; emphasis on process; learning skills, self-enquiry, strategic learning, social and communication skills; meaning-making
Teachers & teaching	Emphasis on teacher's authority; mainly frontal instruction; professionalism as individual autonomy	Shared ownership and responsibility; scaffolding when needed; collaborative development and construction of meaning	Teacher as facilitator and learner among learners; facilitator of learning; collaborative professionalism
Motivation	Amotivation or extrinsic motivation	Balance of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation	Intrinsic motivation derived from curiosity, passion, interest
Assessment	Summative; product-oriented; achievement testing; criterion-referencing	Formative or collaborative assessment; internalization of feedback; transparency of criteria, which may be selected by learners	Sustainable; process-oriented: reflection on process, self-assessment and peer assessment; personal monitoring; criterion-referencing; feedforward
Overall outcome	Regulation by others; dependence on authoritative and more knowledgeable others	Sharing of regulation; mutual guidance and direction; cooperation	Self-regulation; higher order thinking skills; self-knowledge; use of internal and external resources
Degree of autonomy	Heteronomy	Interdependence	Autonomy

Exams, sustainable assessment and autonomy
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Assessment Scales for Speaking – First for Schools

SPEAKING | ASSESSMENT

Cambridge English: First for Schools Speaking Examiners use a more detailed version of the following assessment scales, extracted from the overall Speaking scales on page 83.

B2	Grammar and Vocabulary	Discourse Management	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
5	Shows a good degree of control of a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a wide range of familiar topics.	Produces extended stretches of language with very little hesitation. Contributions are relevant and there is a clear organisation of ideas. Uses a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers.	Is intelligible. Intonation is appropriate. Sentence and word stress is accurately placed. Individual sounds are articulated clearly.	Initiates and responds appropriately, linking contributions to those of other speakers. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome.
4			Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.	
3	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms, and attempts some complex grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a range of familiar topics.	Produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation. Contributions are relevant and there is very little repetition. Uses a range of cohesive devices.	Is intelligible. Intonation is generally appropriate. Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed. Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly.	Initiates and responds appropriately. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome with very little support.
2			Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.	
1	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about everyday situations.	Produces responses which are extended beyond short phrases, despite hesitation. Contributions are mostly relevant, despite some repetition. Uses basic cohesive devices.	Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels.	Initiates and responds appropriately. Keeps the interaction going with very little prompting and support.
0			Performance below Band 1.	

	Grammar & Vocabulary	Discourse Management	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
5	A variety of simple grammatical forms used correctly

Some complex grammatical forms used correctly

Varied and appropriate vocabulary to talk about many different familiar topics | Long stretches of language

There is very little hesitation

Ideas are relevant

Ideas are clearly organised

Varied discourse markers (You know, I mean)

Varied cohesive devices (first, however) | Can be understood easily

Intonation is appropriate

Word stress is correct

Sentence stress is correct

Sounds are clear | Initiates conversation appropriately

Responds appropriately

Makes connections with what the others say

Maintains the conversation and develops it

Negotiates with the other speakers |

Bibliography

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Slides downloadable from https://angloseminars.wordpress.com